

**BAY PINES VAHCS  
HEALTH SERVICE  
PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP  
TRAINING BROCHURE (2023-24)**



Mental Health and Behavioral Sciences Service (MH&BSS)  
Bay Pines VA Healthcare System



## **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**

Veterans Health Administration  
Bay Pines VA Healthcare System

### **BAY PINES VA HEALTHCARE SYSTEM HEALTH SERVICE PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM**

Bay Pines VA Health Care System  
10,000 Bay Pines Blvd  
Bay Pines FL, 33744  
(727) 398-6661

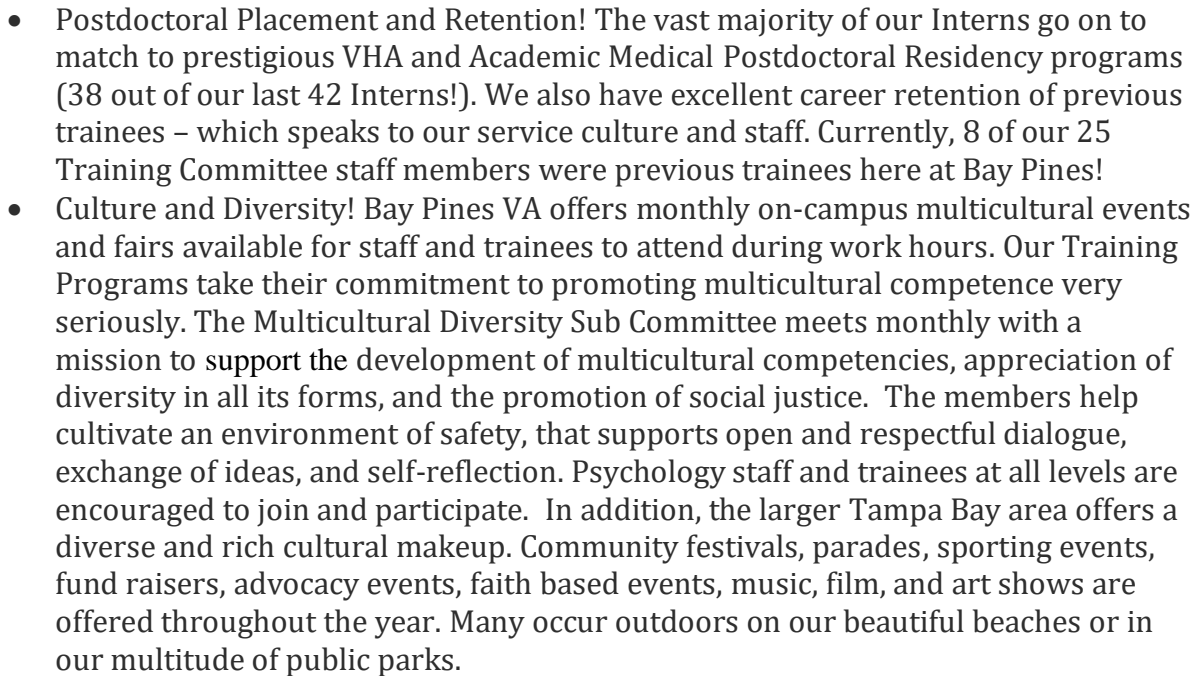
**APPLICATION DEADLINE: November 1, 2022**

Welcome prospective Interns!

Thank you for taking the time to learn about our Psychology Internship Training Program by reading through our brochure. We hope that you consider our site for training, as Bay Pines offers not only incredible quality of life (Psychology on the Beach!) but a rich, rewarding and supportive training culture that values work-life balance, fairness and equality and a respect for individual differences and diversity in its staff and trainees. Please feel free to reach out to us at any time with questions about our program and larger community!

#### **Highlights of our Training Program and Community**

- **Location!** The Bay Pines VA Medical Center is waterfront, located next to the Gulf of Mexico and Boca Ciega Bay and offers 360 days of sunshine and warm (54-90 degrees) weather year round. During lunch you can walk out to our pier and watch for dolphin and manatees.
- **Flexibility!** We are not a one size fits all training program. Didactic schedules are developed each year based on a gap analysis to meet the needs and interests of the incoming cohort. Research and training goals are individualized, to meet each Intern's personal training and career goals.
- **Rotation Options!** We have a large and vibrant Training staff and offer 14 possible training rotations for Interns to select from.
- **Balance!** Our staff models true work-life balance and promotes wellness and self-care in every aspect of the training program. Interns can expect to work a 40 hour week and have plenty of time to enjoy the ocean, parks and community events. Within the facility itself, Interns have access to a gym, yoga and tai chi classes, as well as a running path surrounding the campus.
- **Respect and Support!** Our Psychologists are well-respected across the medical center. We are also highly integrated into most aspects of patient care which provides ample opportunities for collaboration with other disciplines. We also have Psychologists in key leadership positions which provides exposure for trainees to learn about the administrative roles Psychologists can hold. Health Service Psychology Interns are held in high regard for their role within various treatment teams.

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- Postdoctoral Placement and Retention! The vast majority of our Interns go on to match to prestigious VHA and Academic Medical Postdoctoral Residency programs (38 out of our last 42 Interns!). We also have excellent career retention of previous trainees – which speaks to our service culture and staff. Currently, 8 of our 25 Training Committee staff members were previous trainees here at Bay Pines!
  - Culture and Diversity! Bay Pines VA offers monthly on-campus multicultural events and fairs available for staff and trainees to attend during work hours. Our Training Programs take their commitment to promoting multicultural competence very seriously. The Multicultural Diversity Sub Committee meets monthly with a mission to support the development of multicultural competencies, appreciation of diversity in all its forms, and the promotion of social justice. The members help cultivate an environment of safety, that supports open and respectful dialogue, exchange of ideas, and self-reflection. Psychology staff and trainees at all levels are encouraged to join and participate. In addition, the larger Tampa Bay area offers a diverse and rich cultural makeup. Community festivals, parades, sporting events, fund raisers, advocacy events, faith based events, music, film, and art shows are offered throughout the year. Many occur outdoors on our beautiful beaches or in our multitude of public parks.

### **ACCREDITATION STATUS**

The Health Service Psychology Internship Training Program at the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System's current APA accreditation status is, accredited, on probation as of 05/31/2022.

The program is working with the CoA in preparation of an additional review in the Fall of 2022. Anticipated programmatic changes for academic year 2022-23 include an increase in required, face to face direct supervision hours with primary clinical rotation Supervisor(s) and with the Training Director. Bay Pines has trained Health Service Psychology Interns since 1971 and has been accredited as an Internship in Professional Psychology by the Commission on Accreditation of the American Psychological Association (APA) since 1981.

### **For general information, individuals may contact:**

American Psychological Association  
750 First Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20002-4242  
(800) 374-2721

### **For information related to the programs accredited status, please contact the CoA at:**

Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation  
American Psychological Association  
750 First Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20002  
Phone: (202) 336-5979  
E-mail: [apaaccred@apa.org](mailto:apaaccred@apa.org)  
Web: [www.apa.org/ed/accreditation](http://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation)\*

## **PSYCHOLOGY SETTING**

The structure of the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System Health Service Psychology Internship Training Program follows a competency based, integrated practice format as defined by American Psychological Association (APA's) Commission on Accreditation standards and implementing regulations. During the 2023-2024 training year, the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System Psychology Health Service Psychology Internship Training Program anticipates it will provide training for 7 full-time psychology Interns. We are pleased to welcome you to our Medical Center and look forward to your application for admission. No Internship positions are pre-allocated to any specific university program.

## **PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE AT BAY PINES**

The C.W. Bill Young Medical Center - Bay Pines VAHCS Psychology Staff includes 68 doctoral level Clinical and Counseling Psychologists, 3 Practica students, 7 Interns, 6 Residents, a Psychometrist and one Health Science Specialist. The mission of our facility is to provide high quality psychological services to medical and psychiatric patients within the context of cooperative, multi-disciplinary teams. In addition, the staff is highly committed to the training of new professionals and is actively involved in the Internship training program. Individual as well as interdisciplinary research opportunities are found throughout the Healthcare System.

Organizationally, Psychology is one section of the Mental Health & Behavioral Sciences Service. The two primary disciplines in the service are Psychology and Psychiatry. The Chief of MH&BSS is a Psychologist. Staff Psychologists are assigned to a variety of areas in the medical center and at our Community Based Outpatient Clinics. This diversity in assignment is augmented by diversity among our staff as well with a variety of theoretical orientations, past clinical and administrative experiences, multiple research/clinical specialties, and cultural backgrounds.

Administratively, two sections of the Psychology Service are managed by Psychologists (i.e. MHR RTP Programs and General Psychology). Staff Psychologists participate in a number of profession-specific and system-wide committees that address issues relating to quality of patient care, efficient delivery of services and development of new programs.

## **PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING COMMITTEE**

The Psychology Training Committee is responsible for overseeing all Psychology training at all levels on campus. The Committee consists of, at minimum, the following individuals:

Chief, Mental Health and Behavioral Sciences Service  
Training Director, Health Service Psychology Internship Program (Chair)  
Training Director, Practica Program  
Training Director, General Postdoctoral Residency Program  
Training Director, Neuropsychology Postdoctoral Residency Program  
Rotation Supervisors  
Adjunctive Teaching and Research Supervisory Staff  
Postdoctoral Residents  
Intern Representative



Any Bay Pines staff Psychologist with a valid Psychology license is potentially able to join the Training Committee and participate in the training programs. The Psychology Training Committee is responsible for establishing policies pertaining to training; participating in the recruitment and selection of new trainees; evaluating and approving trainee training plans and goals; provision of didactic seminars; addressing training issues as they affect the university-VA training relationships; considering any trainee grievances; and participation in the Psychology Training Programs ongoing self-assessment and quality improvement efforts. All Training Committee members are required to attend monthly seminars targeting ongoing learning/development in the provision clinical supervision; considerations of ethics and legal issues in training and multicultural diversity. All training Supervisors are required to participate in an annual Supervisor Bootcamp to review all national, state, facility, programmatic and accreditation requirements, conduct self-assessments and develop targeted individual development plans for the following year.

### **BAY PINES COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE AND PROGRAM ADAPTATIONS**

In March of 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Bay Pines VAHCS Training Programs, with the unwavering support of medical center leadership, successfully transitioned all previous Intern and Fellowship level Psychology Trainees to full or part-time telework while maintaining all training activities without significant disruption. The Training Director worked closely with the Chief of Psychology, Education Service and the Office of Academic Affiliates to put together the plans and structure needed to continue the training program during the national crisis and adhere to facility and state level social distancing and shelter in place mandates. The Training Director followed all revised OAA, APPIC and APA CoA guidelines and rules to maintain a curriculum and training experience that met all program and accreditation requirements. The transition to telework, tele-supervision and telehealth practice is considered temporary, and will remain in compliance with flexibilities and allowances approved by facility, accreditation and other governing bodies (e.g. APA CoA, OAA, APPIC) until the national crisis has ended.

For our current academic year all Health Service Psychology Trainees have been given the option to work on campus, where they are provided with PPE and work accommodations that facilitate CDC recommendations, facility social distancing guidelines and disease prevention measures, or to telework, from their private residence, or select a hybrid of both options. Regardless of whether they work from home, or on-campus, each has continued to gain supervised experiences on clinical rotations via traditional in-person face-to-face, telework telehealth and/or on-campus telehealth methods, for individual and group based therapy, assessment and interdisciplinary patient care team meetings. To date, they have been able to attend and participate in all clinical program staff meetings, seminars, didactics and supervision via virtual media technologies, and benefit from live, direct observation of clinical care by supervising psychologists. At this time, all current trainees have access to VHA equipment to support telework (e.g. VA issued lap tops, dual monitors), and PPE and private offices for on-campus, in person face-to-face clinical work. All Trainees have ad hoc telework agreements that will extend until the national crisis has ended and new guidance is issued.

It goes without saying that the health and safety of our Psychology Trainees, along with the competent care of our nation's veterans, is of utmost importance to us. We feel confident that we can continue to provide high quality training in professional psychology while simultaneously keeping our Trainees' health and wellness at the forefront in the years to come.

## **VHA ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP**

Applicants for Internship must have advanced standing in a clinical or counseling psychology doctoral program accredited by the American Psychological Association (APA), or Canadian Psychological Association (CPA), or Psychology Clinical Science Accreditation System (PCSAS). We do not review applications of students from programs currently on probationary status with APA. All applicants must receive the written endorsement of their program Training Director as having completed all departmental requirements for Internship eligibility. This is expected to include all coursework and qualifying examinations with at least initial progress toward the dissertation/research project. Applicants should have a reasonable certainty of completing all requirements for the doctorate including dissertation defense, within one year following Internship. The Bay Pines VA Healthcare System is an Equal Opportunity Employer and encourages applications from members of minority and non-traditional groups.

1. U.S. citizenship. VA is unable to consider applications from anyone who is not currently a U.S. citizen. Verification of citizenship is required following selection. All Interns must complete a Certification of Citizenship in the United States prior to beginning VA training. We cannot consider applications from anyone who is not currently a U.S. citizen.
2. A male applicant born after 12/31/1959 must have registered for the draft by age 26 to be eligible for any US government employment, including selection as a paid VA trainee. Male applicants must sign a pre-appointment Certification Statement for Selective Service Registration before they can be processed into a training program. Exceptions can be granted only by the US Office of Personnel Management; exceptions are very rarely granted.
3. Interns are subject to fingerprinting and background checks. Match result and selection decisions are contingent on passing these screens.
4. VA training occurs in a health care setting. Some of the patients served by VA are elderly or infirm, and could succumb to common illnesses like influenza. It is important to be able to document that your vaccinations are up to date and that you have been screened for active tuberculosis prior to starting your training at VA or other hospitals. Securing a statement from university student health center, your regular health provider, or an urgent care clinic can expedite your appointment. Additionally, maintaining a current seasonal flu vaccination prior to and during the training year may be required. Please discuss this with the TD after you have matched and well before your start date to facilitate your onboarding.
5. Drug Screening. The VA conducts drug screening exams on randomly selected personnel as well as new employees. Interns may be required to be tested prior to beginning work, and once on staff, they are subject to random selection as are all other clinical staff. Institutional policies on allowed prescription medications are based on federal government requirements for employment at a VA facility, not on local or state level rules

and guidelines. While Medical Marijuana is legal at the “state” level in Florida, it is not sanctioned by the Federal Government for use by Federal Employees. Please contact the HR department for any questions on this. Please open link for Drug Free Workplace Policy:

[https://www.va.gov/OAA/onboarding/VHA\\_HPTsDrug-FreeWorkplaceOAA\\_HRA.pdf](https://www.va.gov/OAA/onboarding/VHA_HPTsDrug-FreeWorkplaceOAA_HRA.pdf)

6. On August 12, 2021 VHA mandated that all Hybrid Title 38 employees, to include Health Psychology Trainees (HPT)s receive and provide proof of the COVID-19 vaccine or have an exemption filed (medical or religious) with the Designated Education Officer as a condition of VA appointment.

<https://vaww.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/VA%20Form%2010-263%20COVID-19%20Vaccination.pdf>

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults/rec-vac/hcw.html>

Health Professions Trainees (HPTs) are appointed as temporary employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs. As such, HPTs are subject to laws, policies, and guidelines posted for VA staff members. There are infrequent times in which this guidance can change during a training year which may create new requirements or responsibilities for HPTs. If employment requirements change during the course of a training year, HPTs will be notified of the change and impact as soon as possible and options provided. The Training Director will provide you with the information you need to understand the requirement and reasons for the requirement in timely manner.

### **EDUCATIONAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP**

Internship applicants also must meet these criteria to be considered for any VA Psychology Internship Program:

1. Doctoral student in good standing at an American Psychological Association (APA) or Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) accredited graduate program in Clinical, Counseling, or Combined Psychology or Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System (PCSAS) accredited program in Clinical Science. Persons with a doctorate in another area of psychology who meet the APA or CPA criteria for re-specialization training in Clinical, Counseling, or Combined Psychology may also be eligible.
2. Approved for Internship status by graduate program Training Director.

### **APPLICATION PROCESS**

Third or fourth year graduate students in APA, CPA or PCSAS approved clinical or counseling doctoral Psychology Training Programs who are interested in applying for an Internship position in our program should follow the online Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC) application instructions.

The AAPI (APPIC Application for Psychology Internships) online application portal should be used by all interested students to apply to the C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center, Bay Pines VA Healthcare System Psychology Health Service Internship Program. All applications must be submitted online. News and information about the APPIC Online Application process, along with instructions about how to access the service, can be found at [www.appic.org](http://www.appic.org).

When you enter the general AAPI site, click on Directory Online, and then Search for Internship Programs. Bay Pines VA Healthcare System is listed under Florida. Most of the information about our Internship can be found on our APPIC page. However, if you find that you have more specific questions, you may contact the Internship Program Training Director directly for clarification. Contact information is provided below. Your graduate program Training Director should be a useful resource in helping you navigating the AAPI applicant portal. When you enter the general site, scroll down and click on "The Applicant Portal of the 2023-2024 AAPI Online is now available."

Your online AAPI application package should also include: a Verification of Internship Eligibility and Readiness completed by your graduate program Training Director, all official graduate transcript(s), three letters of reference from faculty members or practicum Supervisors who know you and your work well, a cover letter, and a curriculum vitae.

You may ask to be considered (ranked) in **one** program/major area of emphasis (track).  
\_\_\_ General Psychology \_\_\_ Neuropsychology

The cover letter should clearly state your preference for **General Psychology or Neuropsychology** emphasis training.

AAPI application packets must be completed by Midnight on **November 1, 2022** for consideration for Internship appointment beginning the following July. Individual interviews will be conducted by invitation only, following initial evaluation of application materials. Applicants invited to interview and attend the Open House will be notified no later than **December 5, 2022**.

The Bay Pines Internship Open House/Interview day(s) will be held on Thursday **January 12, 2023 and Thursday January 19, 2023**. At this time, we have decided to follow APPIC, CDC and facility guidelines and will hold these events virtually via Zoom. The Open House/Interview day(s) will be conducted from 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. EST. The morning will include a program overview with the TD, followed by rotation presentations and Q&A with our training staff. The lunch hour will be hosted by our current Internship cohort, allowing you an opportunity to relax and ask questions about the program and larger Tampa Bay community. The afternoon will involve an individual interview with (2) Training Committee staff, a self-care break with our Whole Health staff (seated yoga and/or mindfulness exercise!) and a slide show illustrating our community, hospital campus, faculty, intern offices and clinical program areas.

The Internship strictly follows the APPIC match procedures in order to protect an applicant's rights to freely choose among Internship sites. No person at this training facility will solicit, accept, or use any ranking related information from any Intern applicant prior to submitting our rank order for matching.

For further information, please contact us by email:

[vhabaypsychologytraining@va.gov](mailto:vhabaypsychologytraining@va.gov)



*Director of Health Service Psychology Training*  
Zoe Proctor-Weber, PsyD, PhD., ABPP-CN  
or  
*Chief of Mental Health and Behavioral Sciences Service*  
Rod Velezmoro, PhD.  
[Rodrigo.Velezmoro2@va.gov](mailto:Rodrigo.Velezmoro2@va.gov)

*Physical Address:*  
Bay Pines VA Healthcare System  
C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center  
Mental Health and Behavioral Science Service (116)  
10000 Bay Pines Blvd  
Bay Pines, FL 33744

### **SELECTION PROCESS**

Applications are reviewed by an administrator for completeness and eligibility. Completed applications are initially reviewed and rated by current members of the Training Committee who make recommendations to invite applicants for interviews. The Training Director reviews the resulting recommendations. The Training Director finalizes the list of applicants invited for interviews. Emails are sent to all applicants notifying them of interview selection decisions. Interviews are scheduled with Training Director or TC staff member designee. Each perspective Internship candidate is interviewed individually by two members of the Training Committee, by phone or video-conference. The candidates will also have the opportunity to meet with members of the training staff and current Internship cohort during (1) of the two OPEN HOUSES. Interns provide feedback to the Training Committee. Additionally, applications submitted by candidates are reviewed and rated by one current Intern. TC member and Intern ratings of application packets and interviews are compiled and an overall rating score is generated. The Training Committee meets to review ratings and rank applicants into specified tracks. The Training Director submits the final lists to the APPIC - National Matching System for matching. After the final match list is posted, successfully matched candidates are contacted by the Training Director.

In non-pandemic years, competitive applicants typically have two years of prior clinical training experience (Practica) resulting in ~500 direct patient care clinical hours COMBINED of Health Service assessment and intervention (individual and/ or group therapy) at the time application is made. However, we understand that for many, Practica training has been disrupted due to ongoing pandemic related health care facility and program closures and obstacles related to telehealth/telework. For that reason, we also take into consideration *anticipated* hours to be accrued prior to starting Internship.

### **REQUIREMENTS PRIOR TO ONBOARDING**

Once selected in the APPIC National Match, future trainees will be vetted by their graduate school University and VA Human Resources and Occupational Health to ensure their

“Ability to Fully Participate in Clinical Training and Provide Supervised Clinical Care to Veterans.”

The VHA has as statutory mission to train clinicians for VHA and the nation. Clinical learning is an active process, and this requires that trainees are well. Trainee wellness is assessed prior to the initiation of training and then both informally and formally, as needed, during the training appointment. As trainees provide supervised clinical care like regular clinical staff, trainees need to be well throughout their training appointments.

**Pre-Training Certification Process** - Training Qualifications and Credentials Verification Letter (TQCVL): Unlike conventional professional staff who have their credentials verified by VETPRO and other means and may go thru an extensive pre-employment physical examination, trainees have their readiness to train/serve verified by the University Program Director (UPD) or Training Director. Typically, these trainees are well known by the UPD who can verify their mental and physical soundness. Under state and federal rules, trainees have had to receive recommended vaccinations and other health screenings. Thus, the UPD is often able to assess general fitness, through direct knowledge of the trainee and/or through University admission procedures. As the University programs are lengthy, UPDs have come to know their trainees’ ability to handle the stress of training, interactions with peers and others, and their general mental health status. Thus, they can often knowledgeably endorse trainee mental health.

All trainees must have a Training Qualification and Credentials Verification Letter on file (note that a UPD may certify a listed group of trainees as being ready for training) prior to initiating Internship Training. The TQCVL serves three purposes: First, the UPD indicates that the trainee has completed academic requirements and is ready for this new level of responsibility/training. Second, to the fullest extent possible, the UPD is sharing that the trainee is physically fit for duty. Third, the UPD / Training Director indicates that the trainee is psychologically healthy and able to undertake this new level of responsibility/training.

### **Physical Examination and Finger Printing/Background Check**

Prior to initiation of Internship, all incoming trainees must go through a physical examination with Occupational Health. Often, with the properly executed TQCVL, this will involve only having the TQCVL reviewed by the Occupational Health clinician, followed by a discussion of any additionally needed screenings/vaccinations required to work in a healthcare setting.

Physical Examination appointments are conducted prior to initiating Internship and are coordinated through Human Resources. They can occur at a local VHA facility near your University/residence, or at the Bay Pines VAHCS.

All incoming trainees must complete finger printing and a background check prior to initiating Internship. This is arranged once the trainee has completed their VA Education Service / Office of Academic Affiliations paperwork and required online trainings. Once approved, the facility can initiate the ePAS (Electronic Permission Access) and PIV (Personal Identity Verification) cards that will ultimately, allow trainees computer and medical record access.

## **BAY PINES PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING PROGRAMS COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY**

### **DIVERSITY STATEMENT**

The Bay Pines VAHCS serves Veterans who represent a wide variety of dimensions of diversity, including but not limited to gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical ability, regional affiliation, age, and religious/spiritual orientation. The Bay Pines VA's Psychology Training Programs are deeply committed to the appreciation of diversity and the development of multicultural competence. During the training year, Interns continue to build on their graduate training in expanding their awareness, knowledge, and skill set to enhance multicultural competence through a variety of experiences. These include diversity-focused presentations, readings, learning activities; engagement in directed study, research and/or QS/PI projects; discussions with Supervisors, peers, and other clinical staff; and direct provision of services to Veterans with diverse backgrounds. The overall goal of diversity-related training activities is the promotion of social justice and multicultural competence within the mental health profession and society as a whole.

### **MULTICULTURAL DIVERSITY SUB COMMITTEE**

The Multicultural Diversity Sub Committee for the Psychology Training Programs, functions as an extension of the Psychology Training Committee to assist Psychology Trainees in developing multicultural competencies, appreciating diversity in all its forms, and promoting social justice. Within its roles with the Psychology Internship and Postdoctoral Training Programs, the Multicultural Diversity Sub Committee for Psychology Training seeks to cultivate an environment that supports open and respectful dialogue, exchange of ideas, and self-reflection. It is composed of Bay Pines VA Psychologists and Psychology Trainees who are invested in helping to promote multicultural competence for working with a highly diverse patient population and to explore how, as mental health professionals, our individual differences, worldview, biases, theoretical framework, and life experiences affect our clinical work. In conjunction with the Training Committee, the Multicultural Diversity Sub Committee facilitates the Multicultural Training Seminar Series and its associated experiential / immersion activities.

In keeping with the APA Code of Ethics (2010), the Bay Pines Psychology Internship Training Program does not require Trainees to disclose personal information in program-related activities. At the same time, the program recognizes that self-reflection is an important part of the process and is a crucial aspect of developing multicultural competence. The program also acknowledges that developing insight into our own identities and personal histories is a delicate process – one that is best accomplished within a nurturing, non-judgmental context. The Multicultural Diversity Sub Committee along with the core Training Committee works to provide such an environment, with hopes that all will feel comfortable engaging in the self-reflection necessary to develop a meaningful appreciation for diversity in all its forms. In an effort to create a supportive and constructive learning environment, personal disclosures made by participants as part of their diversity training will be treated sensitively and respectfully AND by including all levels for facilitation we hope to create working relationships in which everyone will feel

safe exploring personal feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and life experiences that affect their multicultural competencies.

For further information about the Multicultural Diversity Sub Committee and Training Seminar, please contact the Co-Chairs by email:

[Jennifer.Presnall-Shvorin@va.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Presnall-Shvorin@va.gov)

Multicultural Diversity Sub Committee Chair

*Physical Address:*

Bay Pines VA Healthcare System

C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center

Mental Health and Behavioral Science Service (116)

10000 Bay Pines Blvd

Bay Pines, FL 33744

## **INTERNSHIP PROGRAM SPECIFICATIONS**

### **TRAINING MODEL**

The Health Service Psychology Internship at the Bay Pines VAHCS is committed to the mutual integration of science and practice by promoting a scientific attitude and approach to clinical activities. This approach to training is often referred to as the “Scholar-Practitioner” model (Peterson, et al, 1997; Hoshmand & Polkinghorne, 1992). The “local clinical scientist doing disciplined inquiry” is a descriptive term used to operationalize the mutual integration of science and practice.

### **TRAINING AIM**

The fundamental aim of our program is to develop competent Health Service Psychologists who are ready to assume the responsibilities of an entry-level staff Psychologist at the VA-equivalent GS-11 level or advanced practice Postdoctoral Residency position. This Internship experience provides training to obtain competence in patient-centered practices as well as the 9 Profession-Wide competencies of Health Service Psychology practice as outlined in the Standards of Accreditation from APA’s Commission on Accreditation.

### **PROGRAM PROFESSION-WIDE COMPETENCIES**

We offer both a General Psychology and a Neuropsychology emphasis track. Regardless of track, at a minimum, Interns are expected to achieve the following Program Profession-Wide Competencies:

#### **Competency 1: Research**

The BPVAHCS Health Service Psychology Internship will strive to train Interns in Scientific Thinking and Research Skills. Trainees will demonstrate a substantially independent ability to critically evaluate and disseminate research findings, or other scholarly product. Program evaluation and development projects that involve the analysis of data are considered research for these purposes.

Elements associated with this competency:

- Critical thinking ability in research/scholarly endeavors
- Time management and discipline in the use of scholarly/research time



- Ability to communicate findings of research/scholarly endeavors through dissertation defense, poster presentations, professional papers, local/facility, state or national presentations
- Awareness of, and adherence to ethics code in research/scholarly inquiry and activity
- Ability to integrate awareness and knowledge of individual and cultural diversity in research/scholarly work and activities

### **Competency 2: Ethical and Legal Standards**

The BPVAHCS Health Service Psychology Internship will strive to train Interns in ability to respond professionally in increasingly complex situations with a greater degree of independence across levels of training including, knowledge of and in accordance with the APA Code of Ethics and relevant laws, regulations, rules, policies, standards and guidelines.

Elements associated with this competency:

- General ability to think critically about ethics and legal issues
- Knowledgeable of and acts in accordance with the APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct
- Knowledgeable of and acts in accordance with relevant laws, regulations, rules, and policies governing health service psychology at the organizational, local, state, regional, and federal levels (in addition to the APA Code)
- Ability to recognize ethical dilemmas as they arise, and applies ethical decision-making processes in order to resolve them

### **Competency 3: Individual and Cultural Diversity**

The BPVAHCS Health Service Psychology Internship will strive to train Interns in their ability to conduct all professional activities with sensitivity to human diversity, including the ability to deliver high quality services to an increasingly diverse population. Interns will demonstrate knowledge, awareness, sensitivity and skills when working with diverse individuals and communities who embody a variety of cultural and personal background and characteristics. Cultural and individual differences and diversity is defined as including, but not limited to, age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, national origin, race, religion, culture, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.

Elements associated with this competency:

- Sensitivity and responsiveness to issues of individual and cultural diversity
- Possesses an understanding of how their own personal/cultural history, attitudes, and biases may affect how they understand and interact with people different from themselves
- Ability to integrate awareness and knowledge (including current theoretical and empirical knowledge) of individual and cultural diversity across a range of professional roles

### **Competency 4: Professional Values, Attitudes and Behaviors**

The BPVAHCS Health Service Psychology Internship will strive to support Interns in the development and maturation of their professional identities and sense of selves as “Psychologists” and awareness of and receptivity in areas needing further development.

Elements associated with this competency:

- Receptivity to supervision and life-long learning
- Preparedness for supervisory meetings and uses supervision effectively
- Ability to appropriately manage boundaries in all professional contexts
- Awareness of own competence and limitations
- Recognition of how personal characteristics impact clinical work
- Concern for the welfare of others and their general well-being is evident in all professional contexts
- Possesses an appropriate level of confidence and has a sense of self as a "Psychologist"
- Is accountable, dependable, responsible, and shows initiative

### **Competency 5. Communication and Interpersonal Skills**

The BPVAHCS Health Service Psychology Internship will strive to train Interns in the development of effective communication skills and the ability to form and maintain successful professional relationships.

Elements associated with this competency:

- Interacts effectively with psychology staff and program leadership
- Ability to provide oral, nonverbal, and written communication that is clear and reflects a thorough grasp of professional language and concepts
- Ability to form and maintain productive and respectful relationships with clients, peers/colleagues, supervisors and professionals from other disciplines
- Understanding of diverse views in complicated interactions
- Ability to exhibit effective interpersonal skills. Able to successfully manages difficult interpersonal challenges and conflictual relationships
- Ability to integrate awareness and knowledge of individual and cultural diversity in consultation and interpersonal contexts

### **Competency 6: Assessment**

The BPVAHCS Health Service Psychology Internship will strive to train Interns in the development of competence in evidence based psychological assessment with a variety of diagnoses, problems and needs. Interns will demonstrate the ability to Assess, Evaluate and Conceptualize a broad range of Veterans, including those with complex presentations and complicated co-morbidities.

Elements associated with this competency:

- Diagnostic interviewing skills
- Differential diagnostic skills and knowledge of DSM-5
- Ability to select and apply assessment methods supported by the empirical literature
- Administration/scoring of psychological tests
- Interpretation of psychological tests
- Ability to assess risk for harm to self and others
- Clear and concise report writing
- Integration of behavioral observations, historical data, medical records, and other non-test based information
- Assessment case conceptualization
- Ability to formulate appropriate recommendations
- Ability to manage expected work load pertaining to assessment

- Ability to communicate results (e.g., patients, family members, other professionals)
- Awareness of, and adherence to ethics in assessments
- Awareness and use of current literature and research in assessments
- Ability to integrate awareness and knowledge of individual and cultural diversity in assessment

### **Competency 7: Intervention**

The BPVAHCS Health Service Psychology Internship will strive to train Interns in the development of competence in evidence based interventions consistent with a variety of diagnoses, problems and needs across a range of therapeutic orientations, techniques and approaches.

Elements associated with this competency:

- Ability to discuss issues of confidentiality and informed consent
- Establishes and maintains an effective therapeutic alliance
- Ability to formulate a useful case conceptualization
- Effective and flexible application of therapeutic strategies informed by a range of variables including but not limited to the scientific literature, assessment findings, and diversity characteristics. This includes development of evidence-based intervention plans
- Ability to manage expected work load pertaining to intervention
- Awareness and use of current literature and research in intervention
- Ability to monitor or evaluate progress of intervention using appropriate measures or methods
- Ability to integrate awareness and knowledge of individual and cultural diversity in intervention

### **Competency 8. Supervision**

The BPVAHCS Health Service Psychology Internship will strive to train Interns in the development of competence in evidence based knowledge of supervision models and practices and in their ability to apply this knowledge in direct or simulated practice.

Elements associated with this competency:

- Knowledge and use of theory and the scientific literature in supervision
- Ability to deal with resistance and other challenges in supervisees
- Ability to provides constructive feedback/guidance to supervisees
- Ability to deal with boundary issues and the power differential in supervisory relationship
- Ability to integrate awareness and knowledge of individual and cultural diversity in providing supervision
- Awareness of, and adherence to ethics, rules, guidelines and laws in providing supervision

### **Competency 9. Consultation and Interprofessional/Interdisciplinary Skills**

The BPVAHCS Health Service Psychology Internship will strive to train Interns in the development of intentional collaboration with professionals in health service psychology, medical and allied health disciplines, interprofessional groups or systems related to health and behavior.

Elements associated with this competency:

- Ability to conduct consultations with skill and knowledge
- Ability to work with individuals of other professions to maintain a climate of mutual respect and shared values in regards to interprofessional practice. This includes appreciation and integration of contributions and perspectives of other professions.
- Ability to use the knowledge of one's own role and those of other professions to appropriately assess and address (i.e., coordinate) the healthcare needs of the patients and populations served
- Ability to communicate with patients, families, communities, and other health professionals in a responsive and responsible manner that supports a team approach to the maintenance of health and the treatment of disease
- Ability to apply relationship-building values and the principles of team dynamics to perform effectively in different team and/or consultative roles to plan and deliver patient-/population-centered care that is safe, timely, efficient, effective, and equitable
- Ability to integrate awareness and knowledge of individual and cultural diversity in consultation and interprofessional contexts
- Awareness of, and adherence to ethics in consultation and interprofessional contexts

## **PROGRAM STRUCTURE**

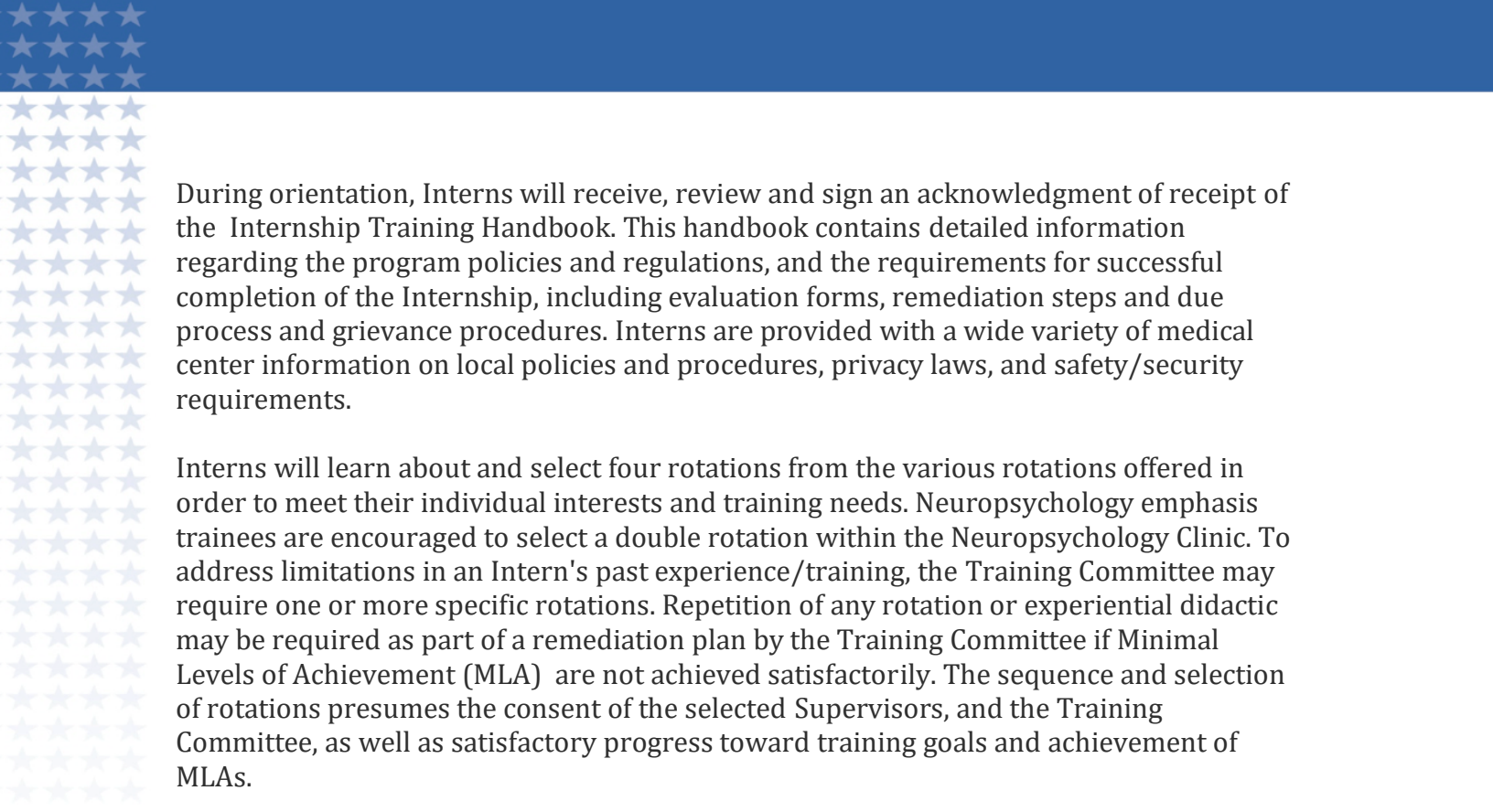
The didactic, research and clinical experiences of this program are designed to facilitate development of the professional attitudes, competencies and personal resources essential to the provision of high quality patient care of contemporary psychological services. As mentors, the Bay Pines Training staff seek to demonstrate and encourage Intern participation in the professional roles of clinician, consultant, team member, supervisor, evaluator, researcher and crisis intervener. The professional growth and development of Interns is enhanced by consistent supervision, varied clinical responsibilities with diverse patient populations, continued didactic training and opportunity for research, teaching and/or administrative/management involvement.

## **TRAINING PLANS AND ROTATION SELECTION**

The Internship year is divided into four major rotations of three months each. Approximately eight hours per week are spent in a variety of didactic training, seminar and research activities.

At the beginning of the training program, Interns will participate in 2 weeks of orientation and self-exploratory and simulated activities and exercises that will promote identification of gaps in previous training, and will allow them to formulate their individualized training goals/plans. The Training Director, representing the Training Committee, reviews each Intern's training goals and sequenced rotation selection, taking into account the Intern's prior exposure/experience, goals and preferences. Additional educational trainings intended to promote efficiency and safety while on clinical rotation may be offered during this period as well, such as Basic Life Saving (BLS), advanced CPRS electronic medical record training and Prevention and Management of Disruptive Behavior training.





During orientation, Interns will receive, review and sign an acknowledgment of receipt of the Internship Training Handbook. This handbook contains detailed information regarding the program policies and regulations, and the requirements for successful completion of the Internship, including evaluation forms, remediation steps and due process and grievance procedures. Interns are provided with a wide variety of medical center information on local policies and procedures, privacy laws, and safety/security requirements.


Interns will learn about and select four rotations from the various rotations offered in order to meet their individual interests and training needs. Neuropsychology emphasis trainees are encouraged to select a double rotation within the Neuropsychology Clinic. To address limitations in an Intern's past experience/training, the Training Committee may require one or more specific rotations. Repetition of any rotation or experiential didactic may be required as part of a remediation plan by the Training Committee if Minimal Levels of Achievement (MLA) are not achieved satisfactorily. The sequence and selection of rotations presumes the consent of the selected Supervisors, and the Training Committee, as well as satisfactory progress toward training goals and achievement of MLAs.

## **CLINICAL ROTATIONS**

### **1. Primary Care-Mental Health Integration**

The goal of this rotation is to provide interns with an immersive experience as a Primary Care-Mental Health Integration clinician. During the PCMH rotation, interns function as key members of the Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT), serving individual veterans, as well as focusing on the wellness of the veteran population as a whole. PCMH providers are embedded within the multidisciplinary PACT to offer brief, measurement and evidence-based mental health services as part of a stepped care model. Interns practice collaboratively with the team, building relationships with care providers, offering curbside consultation, and participating in daily huddles (interdisciplinary team meetings). Interns further liaise with medical, nursing, pharmacy, social work, psychiatry, and Whole Health staff to create an environment of holistic, 360 degree care for veterans.

This is a dynamic rotation, as interns are available for warm handoffs, scheduled patients, and curbside consultation to medical and nursing providers. The Primary Care-Mental Health Integration rotation offers interns several unique training experiences. First, interns develop skill with rapid assessment and brief treatment models (typically 1-6 30 minute long sessions). PCMH providers often complete the initial screening and triage new patients seeking mental health services, in addition to motivational enhancement with veterans who may be in the precontemplation or contemplation stages. As such, interns are exposed to a wide variety of presenting mental health concerns ranging from mild adjustment issues to urgent/emergent crises. Due to the broad scope of Primary Care treatment, interns have the opportunity to work with a diversity of veteran subpopulations: veterans with physical disabilities and/or chronic medical conditions; veterans entering palliative or hospice care; veterans of advanced age; veterans newly adjusting to civilian life; gender and sexual orientation minority veterans; and racial/ethnic minority veterans. This also places interns in the unique position to be



ambassadors for mental health services – welcoming all veterans into mental health care, including underserved populations, many for the first time in their lives. Second, interns are exposed to a fast paced, non-traditional mental health care setting. You will have the opportunity to hone your diagnostic skills by conducting rapid assessment; gain facility with brief psychotherapeutic interventions; and strengthen your voice as a mental health consultant and advocate.

## **2. Center for Sexual Trauma Services**

CSTS is a nationally recognized program that focuses exclusively on the treatment of sexual trauma. The program opened in 2000 on an Innovative Programs grant and was the first residential program in the country to focus solely on women with MST. The CSTS program is the recipient of the HERA Award and was designated as a center for excellence as a part of the Women's Program. The full-time rotation offers a setting where the Intern can develop, refine, and expand clinical skills. The clinical population is complex, with the majority of patients presenting with co-morbid disorders and multiple traumatic events that include military sexual trauma, childhood sexual trauma, and other adult sexual and physical abuse. The complexity of patients and the intensity of the program ensure that Interns acquire the in-depth experience necessary for the acquisition of expertise in working with PTSD. Interns will acquire and practice EBT interventions and learn to function effectively on an interprofessional treatment team in the treatment of chronic and/or complex PTSD. The CSTS program is structured so that patients without prior PTSD treatment are provided with education regarding effects of PTSD and taught basic coping skills. The program also specifically focuses on treating sexual trauma with exposure based modalities (PE, CPT) while managing the thoughts, feelings, and physiological symptoms that these interventions evoke. Interns may have the opportunity to work towards certification in CPT from the VA CPT dissemination program during the rotation.

## **3. Mental Health Clinic**

This rotation provides opportunities for individual psychotherapy, group psychotherapy, conducting comprehensive evaluations, psychological assessments, and interdisciplinary team consultation. Our Mental Health Clinic (MHC) is organized into a Behavioral Health Interdisciplinary Program (BHIP) and you will have the opportunity to work with the BHIP Psychologist on a BHIP interprofessional team that is comprised of psychiatrists, nurse, social worker, mental health counselor, pharmacist, and marriage family therapist. MHC serves a broad range of Veterans who present with a variety of diagnoses/concerns including depression, trauma, anxiety, wellness, chronic pain, chronic suicidality, anger, personality issues, relationship issues, LGBTQ concerns, gender dysphoria, psychosis, substance use, chronic illness, and sleep issues. There is an opportunity to receive supervision in a range of EBP modalities depending on your training interests and goals. These include CBT, DBT, ACT, MBSR, PE, and MI. Trainees can facilitate/co-facilitate groups. Current groups in the MHC include: Anger Management, CBT for Insomnia, CBT for Pain, Coping Skills, ACT, DBT Skills, Coping with Chronic Illness, Social Skills, and Mindfulness. Trainees have the opportunity to conduct comprehensive evaluations with new patients interested in psychotherapy at the VA. This allows trainees to gain experience collecting biopsychosocial history from complex general mental health patients in order to clarify diagnoses. Trainees will gain experience generating

appropriate referrals to other VA services for specialty mental health issues and consulting with other mental health professionals. Interns also have the opportunity to conduct psychological assessments on psychologically complex patients to clarify diagnoses and inform treatment recommendations.

#### **4. Substance Abuse Treatment Program – Outpatient & Inpatient**

The Substance Abuse Treatment Program (SATP) consists of three different levels of care: 1) 28-day residential/inpatient, 2) Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP), and 3) Core Outpatient, with the training rotation including 2) and 3). The SATP consists of staff members from a variety of disciplines (e.g., social work, psychiatry, psychology, licensed mental health counselors, nursing, pharmacy, recreation therapy). The staff members work independently as primary therapists and as a team to provide a variety of assessment and treatment services to veterans with substance use disorders. All levels of care include individual, couples, and family therapy, with elements of multi-family group therapy, assertiveness training, anger management, relaxation training, problem solving, substance abuse education, relapse prevention, abstinence, self-help groups, harm reduction, medical aspects of substance abuse, and discussions of substance abuse related films and videos. The Intern will be expected to act as a professional member of the interprofessional team, attend and participate in weekly meetings and, under the supervision of the psychologist, learn to perform the duties of a staff psychologist. Interns will have the opportunity to conduct individual, group, and couples therapy, case conceptualization, treatment planning, assessment (psychological), program evaluation and research on this rotation.

#### **5. Clinical Neuropsychology**

Clinical neuropsychology is a specialty field within clinical psychology, dedicated to understanding the relationships between brain and behavior, particularly as these relationships can be applied to the diagnosis of brain disorder, assessment of cognitive and behavioral functioning, and the design/delivery of effective treatment. The role of the Intern on this rotation is to provide both comprehensive and targeted neurocognitive assessment and consultation/intervention services on an outpatient and inpatient basis. The patient population includes young, middle aged, and older adults with known or suspected neurologic disorders (e.g., dementia, movement disorders such as ALS, Parkinson's or diffuse Lewy Body disease, traumatic brain injury, cerebrovascular accident, immune mediated inflammatory diseases such as demyelinating polyneuropathies/multiple sclerosis, infections in the CNS, neoplastic/paraneoplastic syndromes, CSF flow-related or hydrocephalic conditions, or metabolic disturbance, neurodevelopmental disorders (e.g., learning disabilities and attention deficit disorder), and psychiatric comorbidities (e.g., psychotic, bipolar, depression, anxiety and trauma-stress related symptoms). The training emphasis on this rotation is on a core-flexible approach to neuropsychological assessment, with process-oriented considerations, as well as the provision of therapeutic feedback and intervention. In this approach, test instruments are selected to provide cognitive ability data relevant to the specific referral question, as well as hypotheses formulated for the individual case based on a combination of the clinical interview and comprehensive medical record review.

Neuropsychology Rotation Learning Activities:

1. **Morning Team Staffing Meetings:** During the morning meetings, practicum students, interns, fellows, and staff will have time to discuss cases presentations, current topics, relevant readings, and sharpen our knowledge through neuro trivia. This is a collegial meeting also used to set the schedule for the day and discuss any relevant housekeeping matters. The initial meetings are dedicated to developing an ease and comfortability talking about cases in a professional/consultative manner. We incorporate a research update toward the second rotation that is every Monday.
2. **ABPP-CN Seminar:** This weekly, rotation specific didactic is delivered in an interactive, lecture and journal club format designed to promote fund of knowledge and skill set required for successful board certification in Clinical Neuropsychology.
3. **Neurology Seminar:** This biweekly interdisciplinary seminar involves lectures in neuropathology and neuroanatomy, case presentations and “live” case consultation with individuals who are experiencing neurologic disease or insult.
4. **Neurology Clerkship:** This is a full time (2-week), didactic and practical experience involving third year medical students from surrounding universities. Interns will work closely with the attending neurologists and medical students to gain valuable hands on neurology experience. Interns will develop skills in conducting neurologic exams, reviewing EEG, EMG, and neuroimaging (MRI, CT), and discussing/staffing cases in Neurology Seminar.

### **NEUROPSYCHOLOGY MAJOR AREA OF EMPHASIS (TRACK)**

The Neuropsychology major area of emphasis is reserved for Interns who have an expressed interest in gaining additional training in Neuropsychology and anticipate continuing their training past Internship in a 2-year Neuropsychology specialty Residency. For trainees matched to this track, a 6-month rotation is available at the beginning of the year. Each NP focused trainee would also be required to participate in ABPP-CN fact-finding cases, Neurology Clerkship, Neuropsychology research, and teaching (1) formal lecture. Primary activities will include conducting comprehensive Neuropsychological evaluations and provision of therapeutic feedback, consultation, participation in board preparation activities and teaching exercises. Optional activities include provision of individual or group based Cognitive Rehabilitation Treatment for outpatient Neurology referrals, working in the Memory Disorder Screening Clinic with the Resident and/or psychometrist and attending the Multi-site VTEL Residency Neuropsychology Didactic.

### **6. PTSD-Integrated Recovery Program (IRP):**

The PTSD-IRP program offers a comprehensive range of levels of care with individualized treatment including Residential, IOP and Outpatient care options. Clinicians in this program work with Veterans who are suffering from combat related PTSD as well as those dually diagnosed with PTSD and substance use disorder(s). The program adjunctively offers housing for Veterans who are homeless, or whose housing does not support their recovery. Interns on this rotation will gain substantial training and experience assisting Veterans recovering from complex difficulties related to PTSD and co-morbid substance use disorder(s). Interns on this rotation are expected to participate in provision of services primarily in the residential program, but also assisting in the outpatient program. While on the rotation, trainees are important members of the interprofessional treatment team and are expected to discuss case conceptualizations and provide feedback regarding patients during daily team meetings. Attendance and participation in these regular staff



meetings is mandatory. Generally, Interns will carry 2 individual patients in the residential program, for twice a week therapy sessions, as well as case-management and treatment planning. Interns will also have the opportunity to co-facilitate or lead groups in the residential program. Interns will also complete regular PTSD assessments and consultations for veterans seeking outpatient services. Interns will be provided with training and/or exposure to evidence based treatment models including: Prolonged Exposure (PE), Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, and Virtual Reality Exposure Therapy.

## **7. Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (HPDP)**

Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (HPDP) provides education and outpatient services to meet the integrative health needs of Veterans. Interns will have the opportunity to, 1) provide assessment and therapeutic interventions consistent with a 'whole person' approach to health and wellness, including brief individual and group health behavior interventions (e.g. tobacco cessation, weight loss, insomnia, management of chronic medical conditions), 2) participate in bariatric surgery and transplant evaluations, 3) collaborate on health promotion events, 4) become oriented to VA's HPDP mission (e.g., public health interventions), participate in weekly interprofessional PACT (Patient Aligned Care Team) meetings, 5] learn about the Whole Health initiative, and 6) co-facilitate TEACH for Success and Motivational Interviewing (MI) trainings for VA staff.

## **8. Domiciliary Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (DR RTP)**

On this rotation, interns will develop individual and group therapeutic skills within an interdisciplinary team treatment approach. They will co-facilitate weekly groups such as Group Psychotherapy and psycho-educational groups such as Effective Management of Mood & Emotion, Effective Management of Anxiety and Trauma Resolution, or Happiness Group. Weekly consults provide training in case conceptualization and experience in presenting your assessment findings to the DR RTP interprofessional team for review. The intern will also provide individual psychotherapy to a variety of Veterans and complete at least one full test battery to be used for diagnosis and treatment planning purposes. In addition, the intern will be asked to develop and present a 4 hour (1 hour/week x 4 weeks) psycho-education program for residential program participants that relates to the issues of homelessness, addiction, employment, and legal problems. Interns will attend and present cases during the daily interprofessional treatment team meetings and attend weekly treatment planning meetings. The intern will be expected to function as an integral team member and actively participate in Program Evaluation and Development processes. Finally, the intern will expand knowledge and experience of Evidence-Based Treatments, especially Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and Mindfulness, and incorporate these into ongoing supervised clinical work. Interns will have the opportunity to conduct individual and group therapy and participate in team consultation, group development, and individual case management on this rotation.

## **9. Whole Health Rotation**

The rotation in Whole Health provides outpatient services to meet the integrative health needs of veterans. Interns will have the opportunity to provide assessment and therapeutic interventions consistent with a holistic approach to health and wellness. Interns will obtain experience working within an interprofessional team model and

participating in weekly IPT meetings. As the psychologist role in Whole Health is new, with very few Whole Health psychologists nationwide, the rotation presents an opportunity to develop content focused on areas of the Whole Health Circle (Working the Body, Food and Drink, Sleep, Relationships, Surroundings, Personal Development, Mindfulness/Meditation, Stress Reduction, etc.) in collaboration with several other disciplines including Recreation Therapy, Nutrition and Food Services, Social Work, Primary Care Physicians, and Chaplain services. A major focus is collaborating with other disciplines to provide education and assist with providing evidence based strategies for motivational enhancement/Motivational Interviewing and behavior modification for Veterans making efforts to implement health behavior change. In addition to helping develop interdisciplinary/group based content, interns will also co-facilitate groups with the aforementioned interdisciplinary staff and provide individual interventions focused on health related behavior change. Interns will also assist with mentoring of Whole Health Coaches. This rotation offers experience conducting transplant and bariatric surgery evaluations.

### **10. Geropsychology**

The Geropsychology rotation is housed within geriatric primary care, and Veterans are seen on an outpatient basis. The Veteran range in age from 70 to 90+ years. This rotation is assessment-focused, and there is an emphasis on becoming efficient in interviewing, selecting targeted batteries, writing brief reports, and providing feedback to both patients and caregivers. The turnaround time expectation is seven days from assessment to feedback. The focus of the neuropsychological assessments is often to differentiate between normal cognitive aging, Mild Cognitive Impairment, and Dementia. Test battery selection often includes considering hearing, vision, and physical disabilities. The didactic training emphasis is on gaining foundational knowledge of the issues encountered by older adults (e.g., social isolation, concerns with aging, normal versus abnormal cognitive functioning, suicide risk and assessment, ethical issues) and learning about assessment measures and normative data that can be used with this population. Interns may have the opportunity to participate in some interventions aimed at older adults like an Aging 101: Optimizing Brain Health Class (i.e., social engagement, exercise, nutrition, and continued learning), and brief therapies targeting anxiety, depression, sleep, and adjustment concerns. Interns participate in bi-weekly Neuropsychology staffing meetings and attend and participate in weekly Geri-PACT interprofessional team meetings.

### **11. PM&R Rehab Psych - Comprehensive Integrated Inpatient Rehabilitation Program (CIIRP), Polytrauma TBI and Cognitive Rehabilitation Treatment (CRT)**

The neuropsychology rehabilitation rotation is designed to provide a mixture of rehabilitation intervention and assessment services for the inpatient Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation CIIRP unit and the outpatient Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Polytrauma TBI service.

#### ***PM&R INPATIENT CIIRP***

The CIIRP team utilizes an interprofessional team based approach to provision of patient centered inpatient services. The interprofessional team consists of a physiatrist, speech language pathologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, pharmacist, social worker, nutritionist, nurse, and a neuropsychology resident. The nature of inpatient rehabilitation requires flexible, innovative treatment approaches that involve shared decision making.

The interprofessional team meets weekly with patients and families to promote patient centered goal setting, health behaviors, self-management, and the highest possible level of independence. The inpatient rehabilitation environment is fast-paced and exciting. The majority of intervention and select assessment services will be co-supervised by the Neuropsychology Resident serving that team in a vertical model with Dr. Proctor-Weber. Interns can anticipate participation in the following activities based on individual training plan:

- Tuesday morning rounds with the Psychiatrist and Neuropsychology Resident.
- Participation in Wednesday morning PM&R CIIRP IPT meeting.
- Intervention. Provision of bedside individual cognitive rehabilitation treatment to learn and apply compensatory strategies, supportive therapy, mindfulness for grief and loss, MI for increased compliance in rehab treatments, mirror imagery for phantom limb pain, behavioral interventions with biofeedback (finger temperature monitoring, heart math) for anxiety to include progressive muscle relaxation, diaphragmatic breathing and guided imagery.
- Opportunities for assessment of individuals presenting with CVA or TBI related neurologic/neurocognitive syndromes (hemineglect syndrome, aphasia, hemianopsia, agnosia, apraxia...).

#### *PM&R OUTPATIENT POLYTRAUMA TBI*

The unique nature of polytrauma injuries creates the need for an interprofessional polytrauma program to handle the medical, psychological, rehabilitation, and prosthetic needs of individuals who have incurred a primary TBI. The Bay Pines VAHCS Polytrauma TBI Rehabilitation Service utilizes an interprofessional team-based approach to provision of patient centered outpatient services. The interprofessional team consists of a psychiatrist, speech language pathologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, social worker, audiologist, nurse practitioner and a neuropsychologist. The interprofessional team meets weekly to promote patient centered goal setting, health behaviors and self-management. Neuropsychology is routinely consulted to evaluate the cognitive and behavioral health/psychological status of veterans followed by this team. The Intern would work with the clinic psychometrist and Neuropsychology Resident in conducting comprehensive evaluations for the PM&R team. Interns can anticipate participation in the following activities based on individual training plan:

- Conduct outpatient comprehensive neuropsychological evaluations with MMPI-2-RF.
- Conduct intervention feedback sessions in person, with family and/or with use of Telehealth Video on Demand
- Manage and participate in the mTBI Assessment Clinic w/psychometrist
- Attend and participate in weekly Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R) Polytrauma IPT meetings

#### *OUTPATIENT/INPATIENT CRT:*

Cognitive rehabilitation treatment refers to a wide range of evidence-based interventions designed to improve functioning by compensating for cognitive deficits in individuals with CNS disease (e.g. mild dementia) or injury (e.g. TBI or stroke). It entails an individualized program of specific skills training and practice plus metacognitive and behavioral health strategies. Metacognitive strategies include helping the patient increase self-awareness regarding problem-solving skills by learning how to monitor the effectiveness of these skills and self-correct when necessary. Behavioral health can address concomitant issues

further interfering with cognitive abilities (sleep hygiene, relaxation methods, motivational interviewing...) This intervention can be provided in-person individually, individually at bedside, in a group based format, or individually utilizing telehealth video technology (VVC). The Neuropsychology outpatient clinic CRT consists of 8 structured learning modules focusing on deficits in memory, attention, and executive functioning. The inpatient CIIRP CRT consists of a selected number of learning modules targets to the patient's needs and deficits.

## **SUPERVISION AND TRAINING METHODS TO ACCOMPLISH PROGRAM AIMS AND COMPETENCIES**

Within this learning/teaching environment, Interns are expected to provide clinical services to patients and spend the majority (80%) of their time in the clinical area to which they are assigned (i.e. clinical rotation). The rationale for this expectation is that training is best accomplished when Interns are "immersed" in a patient care area. The environment provides opportunities for socialization into the profession and facilitates a stronger identification with roles of a variety of health care professionals. Informal or "curb-side" consults are frequent and informative. Opportunities for observation and indirect learning are plentiful. Interns are strongly encouraged to become functional members of the treatment team and to develop a refined appreciation for the skills and contributions made by various disciplines on the team.

As a minimum requirement, each Intern will participate in no less than five (5) hours of supervision per week by a licensed, psychology staff member. Interns receive a minimum of at least 3 hours of scheduled, individual clinical supervision with their primary rotation Supervisor(s) and 2 hours of scheduled group supervision with the Training Director. Style and modes of supervision vary. Video recording, audio recording, direct observation, role-plays, and co-therapy/assessment are among the tools used to aid in supervision. Interns receive supervision and evaluation on their clinical work, documentation and reports, their case presentations, participation in team meetings and seminars, their consultative/supervisory work, and their overall professional conduct.

## **REQUIRED WEEKLY INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP SUPERVISION WITH LICENSED PSYCHOLOGY STAFF**

**1. Individual Supervision with a licensed, psychology staff member: 3 hours per week.** Interns are required to participate in regularly scheduled, face-to-face supervision with their primary clinical rotation supervisor(s) for no less than 3 hours per week. Supervisors are supported by facility leadership to engage in supervision by having protected time to conduct supervision, as well as provided private office space. To ensure that each Intern is receiving the required amount of individual supervision, hours are confirmed by the Training Director who routinely reviews the Intern's clinical hours log to ensure adherence to weekly time allocation requirements. Though interns will receive a minimum of 3 hours of scheduled, face-to-face supervision with their clinical supervisor(s), they often receive well above this minimum as they engage in numerous unscheduled supervision meetings and unscheduled consultations. Clinical rotation Supervisors employ an "open-door" standard that allows interns to access them at any time to address case-specific or professional development needs.



**2. Group Supervision with Training Director: 2 hours per week.** Interns are required to attend weekly, face-to-face, scheduled group supervision sessions with the Training Director of the Health Service Psychology Internship program. Interns are evaluated on their participation in discussion, role plays, and peer supervision, which is shared with other clinical Supervisors in regularly scheduled training committee trainee updates and verbally with interns in verbal feedback.

**3. Individual Supervision with Research Supervisor: Minimum of .5 hour per week.** As part of the program completion requirements, Interns are required to complete an identified research project during the internship training year. At the beginning of the program, Interns are matched with a licensed, Psychologist staff member to serve as their Research Supervisor. Interns are provided with 2 hours per week of protected research time to dedicate to their project and are required to meet with their research Supervisor no less than .5 hours each week. The Supervisor provides evaluative feedback both during the face-to-face meetings, and formally in writing as part of the mid and end of rotation quarterly evaluation forms. To ensure that each Intern is receiving the required amount of Individual supervision with their identified research Supervisor, hours are confirmed by the Training Director who reviews the Intern's clinical hours log at the mid- and end point of each quarterly rotation period.

**\*Supervision hours will be monitored routinely by the Training Director via the trainee's Clinical Training Log to ensure that the required weekly hours are occurring and are documented.**

#### **ADDITIONAL REQUIRED SUPERVISED, STRUCTURED, INTEGRATED LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

In addition to the (5+) hours of supervision described, we would like to highlight other mandatory, regularly scheduled interactive learning seminars with an evaluative component. These seminars represent enriched, hierarchical and supervised group based activities that have a formal evaluative component (direct supervision with evaluation (written) feedback by a licensed TC Psychologist staff member and/or Training Director)

**4. Participation in Interprofessional Clinical Team Meeting (Required):** 1 to 2 hours per week. Every clinical rotation offered within the Bay Pines VA Health Psychology Internship requires attendance and participation in weekly, rotation specific clinical team meetings. These team meetings are attended by an interprofessional staff consisting of the Intern's primary clinical supervisor, other licensed, clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers and LHMCs. These team meetings are collaborative and routinely address clinical, professional and institutional issues. Clinical staff attending the meetings provide ongoing evaluative feedback to the Intern's primary supervisor based on direct observation of the Interns professionalism, ability to interact and communicate with team members, as well as diagnostic and clinical acumen. These evaluative insights are intended to inform in the primary supervisor's formal evaluation and the mid and end of each rotation and are provided to the entirety of the training committee during regular scheduled (monthly) trainee updates. The primary supervisor provides ongoing feedback to the Intern verbally within regularly scheduled individual supervision sessions, as well

as written evaluation feedback on the Intern's mid and end of quarterly rotation evaluation form.

**5. Multicultural Diversity Seminar (Required): 1 hour per month:** Interns are required to attend and participate in the Multicultural Diversity (MCD) Seminar. MCD competence is a broad and multifaceted aspiration that requires commitment to a lifelong learning process, which can incorporate awareness of diversity issues, knowledge of cultural variation, clinical application of skills relevant to individual differences, and community advocacy and outreach. This monthly integrated learning activity is hierarchical and evaluative. It is attended by Interns, Residents, Supervisory Training Committee staff and the Training Director. It is intended to support continued development of multicultural competence by fostering an appreciation for culture and individual differences among clinicians; developing insight into clinicians' own multicultural identity and the limits of one's worldview; an understanding of multiculturalism and intersectionality; facilitating better care to Veterans served by addressing cultural components of difficult cases; and creating a rich learning environment for continued progress toward multicultural competency, development of professional values, attitudes and behaviors, communication and interpersonal skills. Each seminar is led by a triad of facilitators at each level of professional development (Intern, Resident and licensed, Psychologist staff member) to explore a variety of topics relevant to specific patient populations and to the promotion of multicultural competence. The Intern participants are evaluated formally at the start of Internship during the baseline exercises with their Training Director (see attached Cultural Awareness Questionnaire). They are provided ongoing, written evaluative feedback within their mid- and end of quarterly rotation evaluation form on the development of targeted competencies including Multicultural Diversity, Professional Values, Attitudes and Behaviors, and Communication and Interpersonal Skills competencies.

**6. Ethics and Legal Issues in Healthcare and Training Seminar (Required): 1 hour per month.** Interns are required to attend and participate in the monthly Ethics and Legal Issues in Healthcare and Training Seminar. This monthly integrated learning activity is hierarchical and evaluative. It is attended by Interns, Residents, Supervisory Training Committee staff and the Training Director. It is intended to support the development of ethical decision making and understanding and application of laws, rules and guidelines directing our practice within a large healthcare organization. By participating in this structured learning activity, Interns will develop increasing professional responsibility for patient care, consultation, research, supervision and teaching activities. They will demonstrate advanced knowledge of the APA ethics code and understanding of local facility, state jurisdictional and federal laws and rules as they apply to practice as a trainee and a psychologist. The ability to use consultation to navigate ethical conundrums, and to conduct oneself in accordance with these principles, laws and rules is formally evaluated. Each seminar is led by a triad of facilitators at each level of professional development (Intern, Resident and Career/Staff) to explore ethical and legal conundrums and guiding facility, state and national-level laws and rules. The Intern participants are evaluated formally at the start of Internship during the baseline exercises with their Training Director (see attached Ethics Questionnaire). They are provided ongoing, written evaluative feedback within their mid- and end of quarterly rotation evaluation form on the

development of targeted competencies including Ethics, Professional Values, Attitudes and Behaviors, Communication and Interpersonal Skills competencies.

### **7. Experiential Group Supervision of Supervision (Required): 2 hours per month (biweekly).**

Interns are required to participate in a bi-weekly Experiential Group Supervision during the course of internship. This integrated learning activity is hierarchical and evaluative. For each session, a designated Intern “Supervisor” facilitator will provide clinical supervision to the participating Intern “Supervisees” on therapy, assessment, case conceptualization, ethics, diversity considerations and professional development issues. Sessions are directly supervised by a senior TC Psychology staff member (i.e. Practica Training Director) who evaluates participation and engagement of all intern participants. Assigned facilitation duties rotate so that each Intern facilitates a minimum of one (maximum of two) times across the academic year. The Intern participants are evaluated formally at the start of Internship during the baseline exercises with their Training Director (see attached Experiential Supervision Questionnaire). They are provided ongoing, written evaluative feedback within their mid- and end of quarterly rotation evaluation form on the development of targeted competencies including Supervision, Professional Values, Attitudes and Behaviors, and Communication and Interpersonal Skills competencies by the attending senior TC Psychology staff member.

### **OTHER SUPERVISION OPPORTUNITIES**

While on rotation, the Intern will have regularly scheduled additional opportunities to engage in interactive educational experiences with their primary supervisor. These experiences are evaluative and hierarchical and extend across the duration of the clinical rotation period. These experiences allow for enhancement of the Interns professional development and allows the supervisor to monitor and provide immediate feedback on the quality of professional services offered. Additional supervised experiences occur within the clinical rotation on a weekly basis.

### **8. Vertical Supervision with an unlicensed, Postdoctoral Fellow**

When assigned to work with a vertical (Postdoctoral) supervisor, Interns will receive an additional hour of face-to-face supervision per week that is over-and-above the minimum (5) + hours with their primary Supervisor and Training Director. All such Vertical Supervision assignments are conducted under the umbrella of the licensed, Primary Psychology staff supervisor.

### **9. Interprofessional Supervision**

Interns can also expect to receive a limited amount of both formal and informal supervision from independently licensed interprofessional staff members outside of weekly team meetings. While this is limited in amount, and does not count toward the required supervision with a clinical psychologist, Interns will work side-by-side with psychiatrists, neurologists, physiatrists, social workers on specific rotations. Primary psychology Supervisors will solicit feedback from members of the clinical team to incorporate into the intern’s individual supervision sessions, as well as the written evaluative feedback.

## **COMPETENCY BASED EVALUATION SYSTEM**

The basic goal of the Internship program is to promote the professional development of Interns in each of the Profession-Wide Competency areas so that upon completion of the program, Interns are ready to assume the responsibilities of an entry level staff Psychology position or advanced postdoctoral residency position. The focus of training is on acquiring/enhancing knowledge, skills, and self-knowledge related to treating a diverse range of adults. The core modalities used to train Interns are supervised clinical experiences, participation in didactic seminars, experiential supervision, engagement in research and journal club, EBT and case presentations, case conferences/rounds, interdisciplinary team meetings and involvement in a health care environment.

Competency measurement and evaluation is completed throughout the year. Our intention is to make evaluation of Interns' progress timely, open, fair, and part of the learning process. Interns are included in all phases of evaluation from the initial agreement with training goals through the final evaluation. Ongoing verbal feedback from Primary Supervisors during rotations is presumed and Interns should request clarification from Supervisors if they are uncertain about their progress.

At the onset of each clinical rotation, the assigned Primary Supervisor will assess baseline competencies through direct observation to determine the appropriate level of graduated responsibility and any specific areas requiring additional modeling, education or remediation. The Primary Supervisor and Research Supervisor will also complete a written evaluation at the mid-point and completion of each rotation to assess progress and achievement of competencies. An Intern has the opportunity to review, comment on, and disagree with the evaluation before he/she signs it. Similarly, Interns formally evaluate each rotation and clinical supervisor(s) at the same points in time. Interns also provide feedback at the end of the Internship year on the entire training experience in the form of a white paper.

It is our goal to create a supportive and challenging learning environment in which individual differences are respected and professional development is enhanced/enriched. We believe one critical factor in the development of this environment is open, direct, honest communication between Intern and the Supervisor and the development of a friendly, professional interpersonal relationship. Supervisors/Interns are encouraged to meet frequently in more informal work settings. The Supervisors are expected to help Interns become socialized into the profession and BPVAHCS environment (e.g. attend/participate in a variety of service level meetings, educational presentations/seminars held on campus, discuss roles of Psychologists, discuss the political environment, discuss policies and procedures memos, introduce Interns to Bay Pines staff, etc.).

### **PROFESSION-WIDE COMPETENCIES EVALUATION**

The competency ratings used in our program are based on the amount of supervision that is required for the Intern to perform the task competently. This rating scale is intended to reflect the developmental progression toward becoming an entry level Health Service Psychologist, ready to undergo Postdoctoral training or enter into the VA system at a GS-11 level.



In accord with VHA Handbook 1400.04 Supervision of Associated Health Trainees and its supervision requirements related to Graduated Levels of Responsibility for safe and effective care of Veterans, we evaluate Interns based on their ability to perform professional activities within the context of the following assigned Graduated Levels of Responsibility (GLR):

**Room.** The supervising practitioner (SP) is physically present in the same room while the trainee is engaged in health care services.

**Area.** The SP is in the same physical area and is immediately accessible to the trainee. SP meets and interacts with Veteran as needed. Trainee and SP discuss, plan, or review evaluation or treatment. Area supervision is available only when the trainee has formally been assigned a Graduated Level of Responsibility commensurate with this type of supervision.

**Available.** Services furnished by trainee under SP's guidance. SP's presence is not required during the provision of services. SP available immediately by phone or pager and able to be physically present as needed. This type of supervision is permissible only when the trainee has formally been assigned a Graduated Level of Responsibility commensurate with this type of supervision.

There are 6 possible rating levels depicting how much Supervision is required for the Intern to perform the professional activity or task competently. They are as follows:

1 Requires Intensive/Remediable Supervision ( 1st year practicum level) = Most common rating during early, first setting practica training. Ratings at this level represent an area of extremely Underdeveloped or Absent Profession-Wide Competencies, which requires specific attention and a formal remediation plan to address deficiencies. Intensive supervision and education is generally needed . Most commonly assigned GLR: Room.

2 Requires Substantial Supervision (2nd year practicum to beginning intern level) = Intern exhibits Novice Profession-Wide Competencies (basic knowledge, skills, and abilities with limited experience). Most common rating during Rotation 1 of Internship training. The Intern requires more frequent direct observation, and may require ongoing substantial supervision, particularly for unfamiliar activities and/or novel circumstances. Ratings at this level may represent an area of underdeveloped competency, which requires specific attention when noted. A formal remediation plan may, or may not be implemented. Most commonly assigned GLR: Area or Room

3 Requires Additional Close Supervision (mid-year intern level) = Intern exhibits Intermediate Profession-Wide Competencies (able to practically apply and generalize knowledge, skills, and abilities) across activities and settings. Interns may receive this rating during the first rotation, but it must be achieved at least by the midpoint (MLA - END OF ROTATION 2) of the Internship training year. The Intern requires less frequent direct observation and extra supervision is needed only occasionally for more challenging tasks or new areas of development. Interns at this level can engage in routine activities

with minimal structure, but may need closer supervision for more complex and novel situations. Most commonly assigned GLR: Area or Available

4 Requires Standard Supervision (end-of-year exit intern level) = Intern exhibits Advanced Profession-Wide Competencies. This is the rating expected of an individual ready to assume the responsibilities of an entry-level staff Psychologist just starting at the GS-11 Level within the VA system, or ready to enter an advanced practice Postdoctoral Residency position. This is the expected rating at the end of the training year (MLA - END OF ROTATION 4). Intern does not require additional supervisory sessions to complete this task. The Supervisor can rely primarily on the reports of the trainee with occasional direct observation for compliance. Trainee consistently demonstrates sound clinical judgment. Most commonly assigned GLR: Available

5 Requires Consultation Based Supervision (postdoc mid-year level) = Intern exhibits Sophisticated/Highly Developed Profession-Wide Competencies. This rating reflects an individual who consistently integrates and applies knowledge, skills, and abilities into all aspects of professional service-delivery. Able to engage in less familiar clinical activities, and function proactively and independently in most contexts. Rating at this level is expected of an individual who has been working as a staff Psychologist at the GS-11 level in the VA system for six months or longer, or of an advanced Postdoctoral Resident who has successfully completed six months or more of their Residency training program. The Intern acts as an unlicensed “junior” colleague, requiring supervision according to compliance standards. Interns may achieve this rating on a few core tasks that represent particular strengths, however, it will be rare. Most commonly assigned GLR: Available

6 Ready for Autonomous Practice (completed postdoc level) = Intern exhibits Mastery/Superior Profession-Wide Competencies. This is the rating expected of an individual who has successfully completed their Postdoctoral Training year and is ready to apply for licensure, or is a newly licensed Psychologist, equivalent to a GS-12 level in the VA system. Consultation is self-guided and directed toward life-long learning and ongoing advanced practice development. This rating would be extremely rare for interns and be limited to a few areas of particular and exceptional strengths. Assigned level of responsibility GLR for this activity would be limited to: Available

## **DIDACTIC LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

While the majority of training occurs within the clinical rotation (80%), Interns spend 20% of their time involved in educational and supervised, structured, interactive learning activities outside of their clinical rotations. These activities are intended to further facilitate competency attainment.

## **REQUIRED DIDACTICS**

### **1. General Intern Didactic (Required):**

This weekly 1-hour didactic covers a broad range of clinical and professional development topics selected to address specific competencies as well as the multiple roles of the contemporary health service Psychologist. Various teaching methods are employed including didactic instruction, live demonstrations, videotapes, video-tele conference,

discussions, and assigned readings. Topics related to professional and ethical development and diversity issues will receive particular emphasis during this time. Previous topics have included:

- Military Basics
- Psychiatric Interview and the Mental Status Examination
- Suicide Assessment and Operation Life
- The Baker Act (Involuntary Hospitalization)
- Post Doc / Job Hunting Strategies – Panel Discussion
- Case Presentation in an Interdisciplinary Team
- Ethical Intervention within a Complex Medical System
- Working with LGBT Veterans
- Prescription Privileges for Psychologists
- Tort Law and Risk Management
- Prolonged Exposure Therapy (PE)
- Evidence Based Practices
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)
- Working with Hispanic Veterans
- Lab Values for Psychologists
- Clinical Informatics
- Military Sexual Trauma (MST)
- Psychopharmacology
- Licensure Preparation
- ABPP - Board Certification
- Problem Solving Therapy
- How to Build a Private Practice
- Behavioral and Personality Changes with Sleep Disorder
- Post Doc Interviewing Tips
- Sexual Harassment & Bystander Interventions at the VA

## **2. Neuropsychology/Assessment Didactic (Required):**

This weekly one-hour didactic targets the fund of knowledge and applicability of cognitive and personality assessment, foundations in neuropsychology and common medical conditions that present with personality, cognitive or behavioral changes. Previous topics have included:

- Advanced application of the MMPI and MMPI-RF Series
- Use of RBANS in a Medical and Psychiatric Population
- Personality Assessment Inventory (PAI) Series
- Cognitive Screens in Clinical Practice
- The Seven Sins of Memory
- Dementia and Memory Disorders
- Stroke and Vascular Disease
- Assessment of Adult ADHD
- Assessment Ethics and Laws
- Use of Performance and Symptom Validity Tests
- Performing a Culturally Competent Evaluations
- Differentiating Delirium and Dementia

- Parkinson's Disease and Dementia
- Evaluation of Comorbid PTSD and Mild Traumatic Brain Injury
- The Neuropsychology of Schizophrenia and Bipolar Disorders
- MCMI-IV Interpretation Series

## **OPTIONAL WEEKLY DIDACTICS**

### **3. Mental Health Grand Rounds/Medical Grand Rounds (Optional):**

Interns are encouraged to attend both the weekly one-hour Mental Health Grand Rounds and weekly one-hour Medical Grand Rounds. Medical Grand Rounds are facilitated by a variety of disciplines, including topics pertinent to Neurology, Cardiology, Oncology, Rheumatology, Pharmacy, Physiatry, Speech Language Pathology, Dietary Service and others. Mental Health Service Grand Rounds are presented by staff Psychiatrists, Psychologists, and Psychology Residents and have included the following previous topics:

- "The Power of One" Pathophysiology of Delirium
- Exploring the Former Prisoner of War Experience
- Lethality Assessment & Harm Prevention
- In-Roads in Suicide Prevention
- Update on Clinical Practice Guidelines
- Sleep Disorders and PTSD
- Assessment of Alcohol Use Disorders and Medication-Assisted Treatment
- Parkinson's Disease and Psychiatric Symptoms
- Death and Dying: End of Life Issues & Care
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and Relevance in the Veteran Population
- Conversion Disorder: Functional Neurology Symptom Disorder
- Identifying Patients with Mild Cognitive Impairment and Dementia of the Alzheimer's Type (DAT)
- An Evaluation of Burnout Among Mental Health Providers Within the VA
- Toward a Better Understanding Difficult Patients
- Difficult Provider-Patient Interactions
- Cognitive Flexibility and Experiential Avoidance in Veterans with PTSD and Substance Use
- Conversion Disorder: Functional Neurological Symptom Disorder
- Eating Disorder-Update

## **REQUIRED RESEARCH SEMINAR, PROJECT AND SUPERVISION.**

### **1. Journal Club Seminar (Required):**

Interns are required to attend and participate in this bi-weekly, one-hour seminar involving a structured discussion between Interns, Residents, and a designated Training Committee staff member. Following an initial orientation on accessing the electronic library resources and a tutorial on how to critically evaluate peer reviewed journal articles in the scientific literature, Interns rotate with Residents in selecting and disseminating an article of interest, followed by facilitation of a group based interactive discussion that can include, but is not limited to: evaluation of research methodology/design and analysis



employed by investigators, implications and limitations thereof, cultural and ethnic factors, clinical application, ecological validity and considerations for treatment with identified populations. The licensed, Psychologist TC staff member assigned to attend each journal club will provide written evaluative feedback to the assigned trainee facilitator on the development of their Research competencies. In addition, every 4th Journal Club, the assigned trainee is required to select an article that focuses on the practice/provision of Clinical Supervision.

## **2. Individualized Research Project and Supervision (Required):**

At the beginning of the year, Interns will participate in a half-day Research Kick Off meeting where they will have the opportunity to learn about the current research projects, meet the pool of available Research Supervisors and share information about their research interests and experience. Once matched, the Intern will immediately meet with his/her Research Supervisor to develop a research plan including timeline with clearly identified, measurable objectives/goals and to set up regularly scheduled research supervision. Supervision is hierarchical (assigned supervisor is a licensed, TC Psychology staff member), evaluative (Supervisor provides written feedback on progress and attainment of ongoing development of Research competency) and continues across the span of the academic year at regularly scheduled intervals to be no less than the equivalent of 30 minutes face-to-face each week.

Research training goals are individually tailored, based on an Intern's level of interest, academic training and professional goals. Interns will be allotted 2 hours of protected time per week to work on their selected projects. They will have access to research resources (ex. PSPP and SPSS software, reference books on conducting analysis in Excel and SAS, contact information for R&D IRB Coordinator).

Interns are required to select one (1) of the following three (3) options:

- Dissertation/Graduate School directed study research project.
- Collaboration with Psychology staff member on a local or national human subjects research project.
- Local program evaluation/QS/Performance Improvement study under the direction of a licensed, Psychologist TC staff member.

At the end of the year, Interns will present/disseminate their research project results in the form of a presentation, poster, symposium, or manuscript/article at the spring Bay Pines Research and Development Service Research Fair, and/or at a state or national level venue. All Interns are invited to participate in the MH&BSS Research Committee, which meets monthly and provides investigators with consultation, resources and brainstorming opportunities.

## **REQUIRED TRAINING AND SUPERVISION IN THE PROVISION OF CLINICAL SUPERVISION**

In order to promote an Intern's development of emerging clinical Supervision competency, including knowledge of and sensitivity to ethical, legal and multicultural issues in providing supervision, didactic and supervised experiential training in clinical supervision will be integrated over the course of the training year.

**1. Supervision Institute (Required):** At the beginning of the year, Interns will participate in a day-long workshop involving a half day of didactic lectures by TC Psychology staff on:

- The role of a supervisor & characteristics that make a good supervisor
- Laws, VA and APA Rules and Liability, Tiered Vertical Supervision and Supervision Contracts
- Provision of critical and positive feedback
- Boundaries – the ethics of supervisory relationships and Dealing with Conflict within supervisory relationship (remediation and grievances)

Didactics are followed by an afternoon of simulated and experiential Role Play Exercises with TC staff and Postdocs

**2. Experiential Group Supervision (Required):** Following the Supervision Institute, Interns will participate in a bi-weekly experiential group supervision for the remainder of the academic year. For each session, a designated Intern “Supervisor” facilitator will provide clinical supervision to the participating “Supervisees” on therapy, assessment, case conceptualization and professional development issues. Facilitation will rotate so that each Intern facilitates a minimum of one (maximum of two) times across the ~10 months. Interns are provided with written feedback on their facilitation by the Training Committee Staff member who observes each session.

**3. Vertical Supervision (Optional):** For Interns, this is considered an adjunctive opportunity offered only in circumstances where an Intern is exhibiting appropriate GLR skill set in this area and when available. This may involve supervision of Practica students, medical residents or other master level affiliated health professions in clinical intakes, assessment cases, groups or therapy.

## **OTHER INTERNSHIP EDUCATIONAL AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**

### **1. Psychology Internship Wellness & Professional Development Mid-Year Retreat (Required):**

The Psychology Internship Wellness & Professional Development Retreat is a 4-hour experiential activity, typically occurring in early to mid-December during the academic year. The focus of this retreat is to provide the space for trainees to engage in discussion and exercises that promote health and wellbeing through physical, psychological or spiritual activities. Trainees may target self-care, ways in which to combat compassion fatigue and professional burnout and how to maintain a healthy life-work balance within a holistic framework. Trainees can participate in relaxation and guided imagery exercises, mindfulness and gratitude practices, preparation of a nutritious meal or snack, yoga, tai chi, discussions in ways to bolster self-care, and engagement in values reflection. The retreat can be self-driven, designed by the trainee cohort or collaborative, where content and exercises are developed in collaboration with our Whole Health service. The Intern Cohort is required to turn in the Psychology Internship Wellness & Professional Development Mid-Year Retreat Plan 6 weeks prior to intended date for Training Director approval.

### **2. Weekly Peer Consultation (Required):**

The TC recognizes that Interns often relocate to complete Internship from various localities, both near and far. Many move to the Tampa Bay area anticipating a year-long separation from their families and primary support systems. The bonding and friendships that can develop between trainees during this pivotal training year can last a lifetime. In addition to building a strong support system early in the training year due to the commonalities in circumstances, shared office space that fosters daily interactions and spending the Friday structured learning day together, the TC protects additional time for interns to gather informally on a weekly basis for Peer Consultation. There are many benefits to holding a weekly one-hour Peer Consultation group. In addition to fostering the development of a trainee support system by creating the space and honoring the time together, Peer Consultation can also improve communication between Interns and the Training Committee. The weekly opportunity to come together as a group privately, allows each Intern the opportunity to discuss training needs with each other, to share resources, and support one another. It also facilitates group based feedback and information for the TC, so that the Intern representative would be more prepared to discuss group needs with the Training Committee at large.

### **3. Professional Presentations and Teaching (Optional):**

For Interns who identify an interest in provision of professional presentations or teaching, beyond the required EBT and Case Presentations, there are ample opportunities throughout the medical system to participate in additional, adjunctive teaching activities. These can be built into the Interns individual training goals at the beginning of the year.

Examples include:

- Educational presentation to various medical and allied health disciplines on general topics related to psychological assessment, diagnoses & treatment/recommendations (e.g. Mental Health Grand Rounds, Neurology Seminar; Medical Grand Rounds, Social Work Service, Dietary Services, PM&R...)
- Opportunities to provide workshops or seminars to the local chapter of the Florida Psychological Association, or at various VA or State Association sponsored Conferences.

### **4. VA Regional Training in Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) for PTSD (Optional):**

Although all Interns will have ample opportunity to learn and provide CPT to Veterans within the context of their Primary Clinical Rotation, Interns electing to complete 2 PTSD focused rotations may have the additional opportunity to participate in the VA regional training in CPT for PTSD. This is considered a “minor” rotation and would involve dedicating a minimum of 4 hours of clinical time per week to this endeavor. This is an AS AVAILABLE elective training experience and requires attendance of a 3-day Basic and Group CPT Workshop held on campus in the early Fall, followed by a minimum of 6 months of weekly post-workshop consultation calls and completion of at least 2 CPT cases.

The target audience for this regional training program includes students and non-permanent hires (e.g. psychology Interns, postdoctoral fellows), as well as new staff. Once licensed, the attendee who successfully completes this workshop and post training consultation would be eligible for certification as a CPT Provider. Attendance on consultation calls typically begin within two weeks following the workshop training. During the consultation calls the Intern is expected to actively discuss their current CPT

cases. CPT cases are typically seen within the PTSD programs and are supervised by their Primary (PTSD) Rotation Supervisor, a Licensed Psychologist who serves on the Training Committee or Licensed Clinical Social Worker assigned to the PTSD Programs. For this elective, the Intern is expected to attend a minimum of 80% of the consultation calls (i.e. 20 calls) and complete a minimum of 2 CPT individual cases or groups to fulfill this training requirement. The identified facility consultant has the authority to require participation in more than 6 months of post training consultation, depending on individual training needs. Participation in this elective requires approval of the Intern's Primary Rotation Supervisors and the Training Committee.

*\*\* Interns opting into CPT and/or PE workshop with consultation and/or clinical supervision of weekly cases may NOT split their primary rotations for rotation #2 or #3. This specialized experience is considered a minor track and requires a considerable time commitment.*

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR PROGRAM COMPLETION**

**Hours:** The Internship requires completion of 2080 hours to be completed in no more than 24 months. This includes paid federal holidays and accumulated paid annual and sick leave that can be taken during the year.

### **Minimal Level of Achievement (MLAs) of Profession-Wide Competencies:**

**MLA Mid Year Requirement** (End of Rotation 2 – Profession-Wide Competencies Evaluation):

Interns are required to meet 100% of the Competency benchmarks for the Mid-Year Level (i.e., 100% of benchmarks should be rated as 3 or higher). None of the benchmarks should be rated as 1 or 2. Interns identified with any observed ongoing deficiencies at this time must have a signed remediation plan in place. If the remediation plan is not successfully met within the stipulated timeframe, stated as no later than the Mid-Evaluation period of Rotation 4, Interns risk non-continuation (fail) of the Internship program.

**MLA End of Year Requirement** (End of Rotation 4 – Profession-Wide Competencies Evaluation)

Interns are required to meet 100% of the Competency benchmarks at the End-of-Year Level (i.e. 100% of the benchmarks should be rated as 4 or higher at the end of Rotation 4 to be eligible for successful completion of the Internship program). None of the benchmarks can be rated as 1, 2 or 3.

### **Evidence Based Treatment (EBT) Presentations and Case Presentations:**

Interns are required to provide three presentations to the Training Committee during the Internship year. The first presentation is educational, to be focused on an empirically-supported treatment. At the mid and end point of the training year, the Interns are expected to present a clinical case. One of the case presentations must include formal assessment of personality and psychopathology (e.g. MMPI-2 or RF, PAI, MCMI-IV ...), and the other must include cognitive or neuropsychological assessment (e.g. WAIS-IV, WMS-IV, RBANS...). Interns are evaluated on their presentations for the purpose of providing immediate feedback. Any Intern who does accrue a pass designation by the Training Committee members will work on the presentation with the Training Director until a pass is achieved.



**Research Project:** Interns are required to present/disseminate their completed research project as a poster, presentation, symposium or article/manuscript within one of the following venues: The annual Bay Pines Research & Development Service Research Fair; a State or National level convention, Mental Health or Medical Grand Rounds, PI Committee, peer reviewed Journal, or as a book chapter. Interns are regularly evaluated by their Research Supervisor on the attainment of research competencies/skills and meeting of specified goals and timelines within the relevant section of the mid and end of rotation Profession-Wide Competencies Evaluation Form.

## **PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING COMMITTEE STAFF**

**JOHN BERG, PhD, ABPP**

**Emory University, 2011**

**Licensed Psychologist - Florida**

**Program Manager, PTSD Programs**

Dr. Berg completed his Internship at Bay Pines VAHCS in 2011, followed by a postdoctoral fellowship at Emory University / Grady Hospital focusing on suicide prevention and community mental health. In 2014, he returned to Bay Pines VAHCS to work at the Center for Sexual Trauma Services. Dr. Berg's interest in post-trauma recovery stems from his practicum placement during his graduate training at the Atlanta VAMC. There he received extensive training and supervision on delivery of Prolonged Exposure as part of the early VA PE roll out. Originally educated as a mechanical engineer, Dr. Berg has been involved in a number of efforts to use technological innovations to solve health care problems. In 2014, he completed his AMAI 10x10 Informatics Certificate Program. Dr. Berg's research efforts currently center around novel and technological methods of assessment and intervention. Dr. Berg is board certified in clinical psychology.

**DAYANA CALVO, PHD**

**Kent State University, 2017**

**Neuropsychology Internship & Residency, Tampa VAMC (2016-2019)**

**Licensed Psychologist - Florida**

**Neuropsychology Clinic**

Dr. Calvo's area of specialization is Clinical Neuropsychology. She completed her doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology from Kent State University in 2017 with a specialization in Neuropsychology. Following her graduate training, she went on to complete an Internship in Neuropsychology at the Tampa VA, where she stayed on board for two years of specialized Postdoctoral Residency Training in Clinical Neuropsychology. She received advanced academic training providing neurocognitive assessments to patients with a wide variety of neurological and psychological diagnoses. Her primary clinical interests include dementia, medical neuropsychology, and advanced geriatric issues. Her primary research interests revolve around health factors (i.e., diet, exercise) associated with cognition. Dr. Calvo serves as the State Representative (FL) for the Early Career Neuropsychologist Committee, APA Division 40. She is a member of the BPVAHCS Multicultural Diversity Subcommittee and provides clinical services to our Spanish-speaking veterans. **Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship:** As a Cuban American, bilingual woman, Dr. Calvo is committed to increasing cultural awareness and

knowledge in the workplace. She takes note of any diversity factors that may impact patient care and her approach to each evaluation, including selection of neuropsychological instruments, and patient factors such testing behaviors and reception to feedback. She also focuses on being open regarding her own knowledge gaps when working with diverse patients, and takes an open communication approach to foster rapport and allow for her patients to feel understood.

**GREGORY CAPRIOTTI, PSYD, ABPP**  
**Wright State University-2011**  
**Licensed Psychologist-Florida**  
**Whole Health**

Dr. Capriotti is a Board Certified Psychologist in the Whole Health Program. His primary duties include development and implementation of a wide range of wellness programming and services targeted toward health-related behavior change. This includes programming for improved sleep, increased physical activity, improving food choices, and mindfulness based stress reduction strategies, in collaboration with several other disciplines. He completed his graduate training at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio. Both his Pre-Doctoral Internship and Post-Doctoral Fellowship were completed at Bay Pines VA Healthcare System. His primary clinical interest includes interface between social psychology and evolutionary psychology as it relates to health-related behaviors. Additional interests include psychological testing, personality psychopathology, positive psychology, health policy, and cultural determinants of health. **Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship:** I make every effort to emphasize diversity discussions in supervision, at the level of case conceptualization and regarding my relationship with supervisees. I have developed a method of case conceptualization throughout my career that strongly focuses on diversity variables that may impact diagnosis, intervention, and program development. I challenge supervisees to improve their ability to integrate diversity considerations into their own conceptualization strategy. Additionally, I attempt to promote an environment/supervisory relationship characterized by psychological safety and mutual learning. This allows open dialogue regarding how I may see cases differently from supervisees due to our own cultural backgrounds.

**DAWN L. EDWARDS, PHD**  
**University of Iowa, 1998**  
**Licensed Psychologist - Illinois**  
**Health Promotion Disease Prevention (HPDP)**  
**Health Behavior Coordinator**

Dr. Edwards works in Health Promotion and Disease Prevention within the Whole Health Program. Her role includes providing clinical services in areas related to health behavior change, positive psychology and improving quality of life, as well as providing staff training in Patient Centered Care and Motivational Interviewing. Dr. Edwards earned her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology with a Health Psychology track emphasis. After completing a VA internship with a focus on primary care mental health integration, she accepted a position at a regional medical center as their first Behavioral Health Integration Coordinator, integrating behavioral health into primary and specialty care medical clinics

at the facility. Dr. Edwards returned to the VA system in 2006. Since then, she has worked at several VA facilities in roles related to integrating behavioral health principals into both and medicine and everyday life. She joined the Bay Pines staff in 2018. Her primary clinical interest is in using brief interventions to assist Veterans with making health behavior changes, and in teaching them practices related to positive psychology that can improve the quality of their lives. Dr Edwards' other interests include program development and staff training. **Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship:** I address diversity in the context of supervision by not only discussing with the supervisee the impact of diversity factors on the assessment and treatment of the individual patients we treat, but also from the perspective of us as clinicians and colleagues more broadly. I model increased awareness of how one's own background can affect our work with others by sharing with supervisees the details of my own unusual upbringing regarding environment, and the ways I feel this may impact my perspectives and interactions with patients and others. I invite trainees to similarly share and explore with me how their own background and upbringing might affect their interactions with, or perspective of, individuals who are different from them in a significant way.

**RAFAEL S. HARRIS, Jr., PSYD**  
**Florida Institute of Technology, 1999**  
**Licensed Psychologist - Florida**  
**Clinical Psychologist**  
**Substance Abuse Treatment Program**

Rafael joined the Bay Pines VHA in August, 2008. His assignment is within outpatient component of the Substance Abuse Treatment Program (SATP). Previously, Rafael had worked at three different university counseling centers. His approach to therapy (and conceptually supervision) is characterized by an egalitarian perspective that aims for veterans to consider whether their relationship with substances is consistent or inconsistent with their personal goals, emphasizing personal choice. He enjoys the professional struggle between the quest for evidence-based therapies versus the idiographic nature of each individual. He tends to conceptualize mental health consumers from an existential/humanistic framework, while attending to the consumer's theory of change. Rafael is wary of the medicalization of psychology, along with being fascinated by how multiculturalism gets justified as a so-called social justice paradigm when in his opinion it's just another example of hierarchy at work via the search for power. He is originally from Venezuela, South America.

**STEPHANIE HODGES, PSYD**  
**Nova Southeastern University, 2009**  
**Neuropsychology Residency Scott & White Memorial Hospital, 2009-2010**  
**Neuropsychology Residency North Texas VA Health Care System 2010-2011**  
**Licensed Psychologist - Florida**  
**Neuropsychology Clinic**

Dr. Hodges' area of specialization is Clinical Neuropsychology. She completed her doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology from Nova Southeastern University in 2009 with a specialization in neuropsychology. Following her graduate training, she went on to

complete an Internship in Neuropsychology at the North Texas VA Health Care System, followed by two years of specialized Postdoctoral Residency Training in Clinical Neuropsychology. She received advanced academic training providing neurocognitive assessments to patients with a wide variety of neurological and psychological diagnoses. She has performed intraoperative WADA assessments and pre and post-surgical evaluations for patients with chronic pain, intractable epilepsy, tumor resection and movement disorders. Her primary research interests include cognitive assessment of concussion and movement disorders. She also provides weekly didactics to multidisciplinary staff and trainees on a variety of topics involving neuropathology and neuroanatomy targeting specific regions and circuitry. Currently, she serves as a supervisor for interns and fellows within the Neuropsychology Consult Service. Clinical population includes Veterans with a history of known or suspected TBI, neurodegenerative disorder, NPH, CVA, MS, epilepsy, neoplasm, metabolic disorder, LD and/or ADHD. **Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship:** As a lifelong Floridian, Dr. Hodges is committed to increasing cultural awareness and knowledge through communication, supervision and training exercises. Supervision focuses on aspects of cultural diversity through the use of authentic discussions. Supervision aims to facilitate discussions on diversity issues to increase multicultural awareness within the treatment setting but also within the supervisory relationship.

**KELLIE HYDE, PSYD**  
**Nova Southeastern University, 2009**  
**Licensed Psychologist – Florida**  
**Clinical Psychologist**  
**PC-MHI**

Dr. Hyde is a licensed Psychologist in Florida. She earned her Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology from Nova Southeastern University in 2009. She completed her Health Service Internship and post-doctoral training with the United States Air Force. She served on active duty as a Captain in the Air Force for four years. During her Active Duty tour, Dr. Hyde served as a Mental Health Program Manager. She distinguished herself as a Survival Evasion Resistance and Escape psychological expert by co-establishing the first Rescue Group resiliency program in the USA and overseas. While on Active Duty, Dr. Hyde was nominated for the USAF Medical Services Biomedical Clinician of the Year Award and was also selected as the squadron's Company Grade Officer of the Year. After completing her tour in the Air Force, she worked as a general Psychologist in Outpatient Mental Health at the Orlando VA for two and a half years. In 2015, she transferred to the Bay Pines VA where she worked in the PTSD IRP for four and a half years. She is certified in Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) and Prolonged Exposure (PE) therapy. Dr. Hyde is currently working in PC-MHI since October of 2019 when she transitioned from the PTSD IRP.

**Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship:** A significant part of my supervision experience is creating a safe space in which Supervisees feel comfortable discussing a multitude of topics, including diversity. I found this to be very helpful in my own experience as a supervisee while serving on Active Duty as a



female officer. I believe that our individual backgrounds play a significant role in our relationships, which is why I think diversity is always critical to consider in supervision.

**DENISE MAKOWSKI, PSYD**  
**Florida Institute of Technology, 1996**  
**Licensed Psychologist- Florida**  
**PTSD-Integrated Recovery Program**  
**Mental Health Clinic**  
**Practica Training Director**

Dr. Makowski received her PsyD. in clinical psychology from the Florida Institute of Technology. She completed her Internship and postdoctoral residency at the University of South Florida, where she also served as a clinical faculty member in the College of Medicine-Neurology/Immunology Clinic. Dr. Makowski has specialty track training in Family Systems Theory and couples therapy. Her career experiences include private practice, teaching, and serving as both staff and a specialty team Psychologist for Bayfront Medical Center and Advocate Healthcare Systems- a large conglomerate of hospitals in the Chicago metro area. She joined the staff at Bay Pines VA in 2013, as a fee basis Psychologist working in the PTSD programs. Dr. Makowski currently works in the PTSD-IRP and MHC. She serves as the Director of the Practicum Training program and is involved in supervising Practica students, Interns, and Postdoctoral Fellows. Her clinical and research interests include trauma, family systems, parenting issues, brief psychotherapy, anxiety/depressive disorders, psychological assessment and women's issues. Dr. Makowski enjoys activities related to the German culture in which she was raised and overall European influence. She is fluent in the German language. **Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship:** Dr. Makowski is committed to incorporating all forms of diversity into both clinical and supervisory experiences as an effort to enrich learning and professional growth.

**L. BROOKE McCURRY, PSYD**  
**Georgia School of Professional Psychology, 2016**  
**Licensed Psychologist-Florida**  
**Clinical Psychologist**  
**PTSD-IRP/IOP**

Dr. McCurry is a staff Psychologist in the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder-Integrated Recovery Program (PTSD-IRP). She specializes in the assessment and treatment of PTSD and works primarily with the outpatient and intensive outpatient programs. Dr. McCurry completed her postdoctoral fellowship at the Bay Pines VA on the PTSD/Women's clinic track and was hired as a permanent staff member following this fellowship. Dr. McCurry has received extensive training in Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), Prolonged Exposure (PE), and in the assessment of PTSD. She is a primary supervisor for PTSD IRP. **Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship:** Dr. McCurry was raised in a bicultural missionary family and spent her childhood in the South Pacific before moving back to the U.S. Although this is only one piece of her story, it shaped her worldview from a young age to honor, respect and appreciate other's differences and points of view. She strives for inclusivity and encourages trainees to

consider their own experiences and characteristics that play a role in the dynamic therapeutic relationship. Learning from others aids in personal growth and she recognizes that there is always room for growth. Some characteristics may be more salient than others to the Veterans we serve and it is our duty to honor and attend to what is most important when we meet with them. In supervision, it is especially important to allow an open, safe discussion regarding our own unique differences and ways they may impact our

**KATHRYN A. MICHAEL, PHD**  
**Central Michigan University, 2018**  
**Licensed Psychologist – Florida**  
**Mental Health Clinic**

Dr. Michael completed both her predoctoral Internship and postdoctoral fellowship at Bay Pines VAHCS. After completing her fellowship on the PTSD/Women's Clinic track, Dr. Michael was hired as a full-time staff member. Dr. Michael works as a member of the Women's Clinic primary care team to provide services to female veterans coping with a variety of medical and mental health concerns such as problematic substance use, PTSD, cancer, depression, relationship issues, anxiety, tinnitus, chronic pain, diabetes, adjustment issues, and hypertension. Dr. Michael also partners with the Audiology Clinic to provide psychoeducation to veterans about the role of stress management in coping with tinnitus. As an early career Psychologist, Dr. Michael values any opportunity to learn and grow professionally. Dr. Michael's open and inquisitive attitude towards others has been shaped by her experiences growing up as a biracial child in Antigua with both Caribbean and American influences. **Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship:** Dr. Michael believes that it is important to acknowledge and respect the dynamic interactions between individual differences, multilayered identities, and contexts in building collaborative relationships with clients and supervisees.

**ROMA PALCAN, PHD**  
**State University of NY at Buffalo, 1995**  
**Licensed Psychologist - Florida**  
**Counseling Psychologist**  
**Domiciliary Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (DR RTP)**

Roma Palcan is a licensed Psychologist who currently serves in the Domiciliary Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program, providing support for Veterans who seek independent housing and employment. Prior to this VA assignment, she was Health Behavior Coordinator, and Primary Care Psychologist at Bay Pines VA Health Care System. She also serves as the Learning Circle Leader Expert of VA Voices. Dr. Palcan received her doctorate in Counseling Psychology from the State University of NY at Buffalo in 1995. Prior to her appointment at BPVAHCS, Dr. Palcan spent 13 years in private practice during which time she owned, operated and managed the multi-disciplinary practice, Life and Health Psychology Associates Inc. One of her most rewarding professional endeavors was co-hosting a live talk radio program as the Psychologist expert in men's mental health issues. Outside of her profession, Roma Palcan lives a quiet and peaceful life in beautiful St. Petersburg with her children.

**DANIEL PHILIP, PHD**

**University of Florida, 2003**

**Licensed Psychologist - Florida**

**Clinical Psychologist**

**Program Manager, PRRC**

**General Postdoctoral Fellowship Training Director**

Dr. Philip joined the Substance Abuse Treatment Program (SATP) at the Bay Pines VAMC in March 2012, after spending nearly 2 years as a Psychologist in Primary Care Behavioral Health at the VA Outpatient Clinic in Jacksonville, FL. He now works as the program manager for the PRRC program. Prior to joining the VA, Dr. Philip worked in two counseling centers (where he held appointments as Assistant Director and Director of Training), taught undergraduate, masters, and doctoral students at three different universities, and had a small private practice. During his predoctoral Internship, he participated in a year-long specialization in substance abuse counseling, and continued this focus upon graduating. Dr. Philip's takes an integrated approach to therapy, balancing evidence-based therapies with individual client needs. He believes strongly in the importance of the therapeutic alliance for effective counseling, and uses a wide range of interventions to help clients with their use and abuse of substances as well as overall mental health issues. **Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship:** The idea that our views on life are influenced, at least in part if not substantially, by our past experiences is immutable. Similarly in my mind, our past experiences are often heavily shaped by personal characteristics of both ourselves and the others around us; hence, diversity characteristics play a significant role in our lives and in therapy. In supervision, I believe it is critical to identify not only how issues of diversity play a role for our clients but also how they influence our own worldview. I look to engage supervisees in discussions of our own diversity as a means to help facilitate their self-knowledge and understanding of how a patients' diversity impacts them.

**JEFFERY PRATT, PSYD**

**Florida Institute of Technology, 2015**

**Licensed Psychologist-Kentucky**

**Clinical Psychologist**

**PTSD-Integrated Recovery Program**

Dr. Pratt is a staff Psychologist in the PTSD-IRP. He received his Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology from the Florida Institute of Technology in 2015 and completed his clinical Internship at the Lexington VA Medical Center in Lexington, KY. After his Internship, he was hired as a staff Psychologist at the Lexington VA, working in the PTSD Clinical Team. In 2018, he joined the Bay Pines VAHSC as part of the PTSD-IRP team, working primarily in the residential program. His clinical work and interests include group and individual therapy to a complex population of Veterans with PTSD and substance use disorders, involving evidence-based treatment modalities, including Cognitive Processing Therapy and Prolonged Exposure. He also utilizes Virtual Reality equipment to assist in Virtual Reality Exposure Therapy. **Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship:** Dr. Pratt utilizes personal and clinical experiences with diverse populations to shape the way he conceptualizes and works with clients as well as

supervisees. He encourages supervisees to utilize their own diverse experiences to guide their learning and enhance the supervisory relationship

**JENNIFER PRESNALL-SHVORIN, PHD**

**University of Kentucky-2015**

**Licensed Psychologist-Florida, New York**

**Program Manager, Primary Care - Mental Health Integration**

Dr. Presnall-Shvorin is the Psychology Program Manager for Primary Care - Mental Health Integration (PCMHI) and a Psychology Supervisor for PCMHI and BHIP. She is the Chair of the Disruptive Behavior Committee and Chair of the Psychology Training Committee's Multicultural Diversity Subcommittee. She also serves as Secretary for the Association of VA Psychologist Leaders (AVAPL) and is a member of APA and APA Division 18. She completed her graduate training at the University of Kentucky, with a research focus on assessment of personality disorder from the Five-Factor Model perspective, and completed her internship at VA Connecticut Healthcare System – West Haven Campus with an emphasis on PTSD. She completed postdoctoral training at the War-Related Illness and Injury Study Center (WRIISC) in NJ. **Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship:** I attempt to demonstrate cultural humility in ongoing discussions of diversity within supervision. Whenever possible, I try to incorporate aspects of individual and cultural identity within assessment and treatment planning, and make efforts to explicitly address individual differences within the context of PCMHI. I try to recognize my own areas of privilege (e.g., race and ethnicity) while working toward empowerment in areas of less privilege (e.g., gender and sexual orientation). I invite supervisees to bring discussion of their own experiences related to diversity, power, and privilege into the supervisory relationship.

**ZOE PROCTOR-WEBER, PSYD, PHD, ABPP-CN**

**Nova Southeastern University, 2005**

**Neuropsychology Postdoctoral Residency Tampa VAMC 2005-2007**

**Licensed Psychologist - Florida**

**Director of Health Service Psychology Internship Training**

**Director of Neuropsychology Postdoctoral Residency Training**

**Neuropsychology Clinic and PM&R CIIRP/PM&R Polytrauma TBI Program**

Dr. Proctor-Weber is a Board Certified Clinical Neuropsychologist. She completed her 2-year Division 40 neuropsychology fellowship at the Tampa VAMC in acute poly-trauma TBI, epilepsy and memory disorders. She has worked at USF within the Psychiatry Department assessing memory disorders and at Tampa General Hospital within the neurology and rehabilitation departments providing intraoperative Wada assessment and comprehensive pre and post surgical NP evaluations for patients with intractable epilepsy. Primary research interests involve Cognitive Assessment, Traumatic Brain Injury and Intra-individual Variation within neurologically compromised individuals. She is PI on multiple active research projects, including a large Neuropsychology Research Database. She is the Alternate Chair of the Bay Pines IRB and serves as Treasurer/Secretary of the National VA Psychology Training Council (VAPTC). She teaches weekly didactics focused on neuropathology, neuroanatomy and neuropsychological assessment. She serves as



research mentor and primary supervisor for clinical training rotations within PM&R CIIRP and PM&R Polytrauma TBI and the general Neuropsychology Clinic. Clinical population includes Veterans with a history of known or suspected TBI, neurodegenerative disorder, NPH, CVA, MS, epilepsy, neoplasm, endocrine and metabolic disorders, and/or movement disorders. She is a Past President of the Florida Psychological Association and serves as the editor for the American Psychological Association's Division 31 Newsletter. Dr. Proctor-Weber is also the Director of Training for the Health Service Psychology Internship and Neuropsychology Postdoctoral Residency programs at Bay Pines VAHCS. She is a member of AACN, FPA and APA Division 40, 18 and 31. **Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship:** In supervision, I join our trainees in cultivating an advanced appreciation for how culture and diversity affect the evaluation process. Selection of appropriate measurements and normative comparison groups take into consideration external factors, such as language proficiency, access to education and level of acculturation. Additionally, we attend to our own beliefs, worldview and innate biases that moderate the way in which we interpret behaviors, Awareness of, and sensitivity to the unique aspects of identity and self are critical in conducting a culturally informed examination.

**CHELSEA SAGE-GERMAIN, PHD**  
**Western Michigan University, 2018**  
**Licensed Psychologist – Michigan**  
**PTSD-IRP (IOP/OUTPATIENT)**

Dr. Sage-Germain graduated from Western Michigan University after completing her predoctoral internship at Bay Pines VAHCS. Dr. Sage-Germain next completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the Battle Creek VA's Wyoming CBOC located near Grand Rapids, MI, before returning to Bay Pines as a staff member. Dr. Sage-Germain works in the PTSD-IRP intensive outpatient program, which delivers evidence based treatments for PTSD virtually in a condensed three to four week treatment protocol. She also carries a caseload of traditional outpatients, and co-facilitates mindfulness and DBT-informed coping skills groups for Veterans in the outpatient PTSD clinic. She is trained in CPT and PE and utilizes both modalities in her clinical work. Her theoretical orientation is informed by a behavioral and contemporary cognitive behavioral approach. **Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship:** As a young, white, civilian provider, I am aware that my visible identities are often different from the Veterans I serve. It is important to reflect on how my own characteristics and biases may be present in both a therapeutic and supervisory relationship. I seek to have open dialogue in supervision about how diversity variables impact the treatment process and supervisory relationship.

**CARESSA SLOCUM, PHD**  
**Central Michigan University, 2019**  
**Licensed Clinical Psychologist – Florida**  
**St. Petersburg VA Outpatient Clinic**

Dr. Slocum completed both her predoctoral Internship and postdoctoral fellowship at Bay Pines VAHCS. After completing her fellowship on the PTSD/Women's Clinic track, Dr.

Slocum was hired as a full-time staff member. Currently, Dr. Slocum works as the general mental health psychologist at the St. Petersburg VA Outpatient Clinic located in downtown St. Petersburg, approximately 20 minutes from the Bay Pines VA main campus. Dr. Slocum has specialized training in the assessment and treatment of anxiety and trauma-related disorders and depression, including the use of CPT, PE, CBT-D, and CBT-CP. Within her current position Dr. Slocum collaborates with a small interdisciplinary mental health team consisting of psychology, psychiatry, nursing, and social work/PCMHI to provide care for patients presenting with the full-range of mental health concerns. Dr. Slocum strives to foster a space that promotes open and honest communication and mutual learning, both in work with patients and during clinical supervision. She believes that each person brings vital knowledge and expertise, especially about their own lived experience. Dr. Slocum actively seeks to identify and incorporate diversity-related issues into her case conceptualizations and patient care and encourages critical thinking and discussion with trainees about these topics. As an adjunct member of the training committee and member of the Multicultural Diversity Subcommittee, Dr. Slocum provides an open space for discussion, reflection, and learning of diversity-related issues through discussion of current events and policies, the sharing of personal reactions and lived experiences, and the collaborative development of educational materials and resources. As a white cis-woman, she aims to bring openness and humility to the supervisory relationship, in an effort to foster a collegial relationship where mistakes and successes can be openly discussed.

**ERIC L SULLIVAN, PhD**

**Suffolk University, 2010**

**Licensed Psychologist - Ohio**

**Clinical Psychologist**

**Home Based Primary Care (HBPC) – Bradenton, Sarasota, Bay Pines**

**Behavioral Health Interdisciplinary Program (BHIP) - Bradenton**

Dr. Sullivan serves the Home Based Primary Care (HBPC) programs at the Bradenton and Sarasota Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs), and the Bay Pines VA Medical Center (VAMC). HBPC treats chronically ill Veterans in their home with an interdisciplinary team approach. He covers for the Behavioral Health Interdisciplinary Program (BHIP) team in Bradenton, which is a general mental health clinic. Clinical specialties include assessment of cognitive problems common among a geriatric population, and provision of geropsychological interventions including psychotherapy for depression, anxiety, and adjustment issues, and caregiver support. He performs all services either virtually or in the Veterans' homes. Dr. Sullivan was previously employed at the Columbus VA Ambulatory Care Center in Ohio for 8 years on a BHIP team. He received extensive training and consultation in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), Problem Solving Therapy (PST), Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT) for couples, Collaborative Assessment and Management of Suicidality (CAMS), and the Unified Protocol (UP). In the past Dr. Sullivan served as national consultant and regional trainer for the VA Problem Solving Therapy program. He is a lifelong learner who is currently in the process of obtaining board certification as a geropsychologist. Dr. Sullivan serves as consulting editor for the APA journal "Professional Psychology: Research and Practice." He enjoys cooking and eating good food, listening to and playing music, and traveling with his family.

**Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship:** Appreciation of diversity and awareness of the influence of our personal experiences and worldview is crucial to providing effective assessment and intervention to Veterans. Careful and sensitive, but also direct and genuine, discussion with Supervisors and colleagues about diversity issues is important to growth as a trainee and continuous improvement as a licensed professional. As a supervisor I will ask trainees to examine their own experience and worldview, to explore its potential impact on clients, to explore the impact of clients on the trainee, and to use insights from these discussions to grow in the ability to provide effective services to clients that meets them where they are, and honors their values and experiences.

**CHANNING SOFKO, PhD**

**University of South Alabama, 2017**

**Neuropsychology Postdoctoral Fellowship, Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University, 2017-2019**

**Licensed Psychologist – Rhode Island**

**Community Living Center (CLC)**

Dr. Sofko received her doctoral degree from the University of South Alabama's Combined-Integrated Clinical and Counseling Psychology doctoral program. She completed her pre-doctoral internship training at the Vanderbilt-Veteran's Affairs Internship Consortium. Dr. Sofko also completed a two-year post-doctoral fellowship in the Clinical Neuropsychology Specialty Program (CNSP) at the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University where she conducted inpatient and outpatient neuropsychological evaluations with a wide variety of neurologic (e.g., dementias, CVAs, TBI, HIV, NPH, MS, epilepsy, endocrine, and genetic) and psychiatric diagnoses. She also took part in an interdisciplinary pre-surgical DBS 'fast-track' clinic for individuals with Parkinson's disease, and she engaged in weekly interdisciplinary consensus consultation meetings with memory-disorders Neurologists. At the Bay Pines VA, she has worked for nearly three years in the Geropsychology Clinic conducting neuropsychological evaluations and providing individual psychotherapy for adults age 70 and older. Dr. Sofko is the Chair of the Bay Pines Dementia Committee, and she leads bi-weekly staffing meetings for neuropsychology staff and neuropsychology trainees. In 2022, she received a VISN 8 Innovation Grant for supplies for a virtual interdisciplinary Aging 101: Optimizing Brain Health Class for Veterans. In June 2022, she will begin working as a Geropsychologist/Neuropsychologist in the Community Living Center (CLC). **Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship:** As per APA's Guidelines for Clinical Supervision in Health Service Psychology, Dr. Sofko intentionally brings articles/discussions of diversity into supervision. In addition to relevant diversity-related clinical discussions, she and her trainees discuss research-based information on diversity factors related to older adults (i.e., poverty rates, physical disabilities, societal norms and values, caregiver stress/views across ethnicities and cultures).

**JADA J. STEWART-WILLIS, PHD, ABPP-CN**

**Nova Southeastern University, 2015**

**Neuropsychology Postdoctoral Residency, Bay Pines VA Health Care System, 2015-2017**

**Licensed Psychologist - Florida**

**Neuropsychology Clinic**

Dr. Stewart-Willis completed her doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology at Nova Southeastern University in June of 2015. Following her graduate training, she successfully completed an Internship in Neuropsychology at the Bay Pines VA Health Care System followed by two years of specialized Postdoctoral Residency Training in Clinical Neuropsychology. Dr. Stewart-Willis received advanced academic training providing neurocognitive assessments and cognitive rehabilitation treatment to patients with a wide variety of neurologic and psychiatric diagnoses. She is licensed in the state of Florida, and her current specialized clinical interests include: assessment of movement disorders, CVA & vascular-related cognitive impairment, immune mediated demyelinating diseases, and assessment and rehabilitation of traumatic brain injury. She also serves as consultant liaison to the Bay Pines VAHCS Radiation/Oncology Service. As an attending on the Neuropsychology Outpatient Consult service, she works with a diverse Veteran population, and also provides evaluation services for individuals admitted to inpatient units (e.g., Telemetry, Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, and Community Living Center). Dr. Stewart-Willis coordinates the Neuropsychology Research Lab/Collective, and her primary research interests include: cognitive aging, vascular correlates of neurocognitive decline, and the clinical utility of cognitive measures used in the assessment of TBI and neurodegenerative disorders. She is an active member of professional affiliations including INS and APA Division 40. **Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship:** Deliberately. In supervision, aspects of diversity often shape our understanding of an experience or issue, as well as provide a context for our interpersonal exchanges. Other times, we encounter aspects of diversity in ways that don't require further examination at all. In either circumstance, I encourage students toward authentic interactions with elements of diversity (their own as well as their patient's). I also attempt to model this by exploring in supervision how my own cultural background (e.g., African American, female, middle-class), informs my understanding and views of a certain topic and/or how I approach training and my clinical work. It is my belief that when we can explore cultural differences and similarities in supervision, we are better prepared to sit with, discuss, and address them when needed as they arise in practice.

**ROD VELEZMORO, PHD**

**University of Central Florida, 2014**

**Licensed Psychologist - Florida**

**Clinical Psychologist**

**Chief, Mental Health and Behavioral Sciences Service**

Dr. Velezmoro received his Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of Central Florida in 2014. He completed Internship at Bay Pines VAHCS followed by postdoctoral residency in trauma/primary care also at Bay Pines. He joined staff at Bay Pines in 2015. Dr. Velezmoro has served as the Director of Whole Health Services for Bay Pines Healthcare System, and is currently Chief of the MH&BSS. Dr. Velezmoro is involved in promoting training opportunities for staff and our pre and postdoctoral psychology trainees, research, improving customer service within the VA, and promoting diversity.



**TRECIA-ANN YAP, PSYD.**

**Argosy University/Washington DC Campus, 2010**

**Licensed Psychologist – Florida and Maryland**

**Clinical Psychologist**

**PTSD Clinic**

Dr. Yapp is licensed as a Clinical Psychologist in the state of Florida and Maryland. She earned her Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology from Argosy University/Washington DC Campus in 2010 and her MA in Professional Counseling degree in 2003. She completed her Internship and Residency with the United States Army. She served on active duty as a Captain in the United States Army for 6 years and 10 months. She was promoted to Major in the United States Army while in the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) component. She is currently in the IRR in the United States Army. While in the United States Army she deployed to Afghanistan for 10 months. During her tour she served as the Officer in Charge of a Warrior Restoration Center. She established telehealth for military members serving in remote areas and developed the standard operating procedures for implanting a walk-in clinic. Following completion of active duty military service, she worked as a clinical psychologist at MacDill Air Force Base for four years. In 2019 she transferred to US SOUTHCOM Army Health Clinic. Due to a need to relocate, she joined the team at Bay Pines VA in 2020. Dr. Yapp is currently working in the PTSD outpatient clinic. **Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship:** Dr. Yapp was born in Spanish Town, Jamaica and came to the United States when she was 6 years old. The process of acculturating to a new culture was difficult. As a child growing up in the U.S. she experienced racism and discrimination based on her nationality. She found comfort in the church which led her to missionary work in Honduras, Indonesia, and Malaysia. Her personal experience along with her experience with other cultures during her missionary work contributed to her desire to enter the military. Acclimating to the military culture was a challenge but through the process she learned that she could overcome challenges in life. She encourages inclusion and strongly believe that our differences makes us stronger. She encourages trainees to openly discuss differences and similarities. She strives to create an environment that is non-judgmental and safe which would allow for sensitive topics to be discussed.

**ARIELA YASOVA-ZAFFOS, PSYD**

**Nova Southeastern University, 2017**

**Licensed Psychologist - Wisconsin**

**PTSD- Integrated Recovery Program**

**PTSD/SUD Specialist**

Dr. Yasova received her bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Florida in 2011 (Go Gators!) and her doctoral degree from Nova Southeastern University in 2017. She has been a licensed Psychologist in the State of Wisconsin since 2018. She completed her Health Service Internship at the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Healthcare Center (a combined VA and DOD facility.) She completed her post-doctoral fellowship specializing in the diagnosis and treatment of substance use disorders. Upon completion of her training, she was employed at Lovell FHCC as a clinical psychologist in their residential PTSD

program. At the end of 2019, Dr. Yasova moved back to her hometown of Clearwater, Florida and became a psychologist at the CWY Bill Young VA. She works in the residential PTSD-Integrated Recovery Program and serves as the PTSD/SUD psychologist. She is certified in Cognitive Processing Therapy, and her primary theoretical orientation is cognitive behavioral. Dr. Yasova has a tendency to also conceptualize from an ACT lens. **Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship:** Dr. Yasova was raised in a multicultural home and is bi-lingual (English/Spanish). She reflects on her unique cultural background to identify how it impacts her case conceptualization. She engages clients in discussions of how their diversity characteristics impact their experiences and works in supervision helping trainees explore this. Dr. Yasova views supervision as a safe time to have difficult conversations about diversity characteristics and how they influence us as providers, impact psychosocial functioning, and affect the therapeutic process.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **Internship Year:**

The Internship is a full-time, one-year appointment to be completed from July 17, 2023 - July 16, 2024. Instances in which the one-year period needs to be extended because of illness or other extenuating circumstances will be addressed individually by the Training Committee and Office of Academic Affiliations. A maximum of 24 months is allowed by APA to complete all Internship training requirements regardless of extenuating circumstances. Any approved extension of the one-year training period would occur without funding.

### **Stipend:**

The current stipend for full-time VA Interns is \$26,297 paid biweekly throughout the annual appointment period. This stipend is subject to Federal Income Tax withholding. Interns are classified as full-time employees, making them eligible for Federal Employee Health Benefits. Interns are NOT eligible for participation in Family Medical Leave, including Paid Parental Leave, Life Insurance (FEGLI), Vision or Dental (FEDVIP), or Flex Spending Accounts (FSAFEDS) (This list of entitlements is not comprehensive).

### **Leave Time:**

Interns will accrue 4 hours of paid sick leave (LS – Sick) and 4 hours of paid annual leave (LA - Annual) every 2-week pay period. This equates to approximately 13 days of sick leave and 13 days of annual leave over the course of the Internship year. In addition, there are 11 Federal Holidays. Interns are encouraged to use leave time judiciously. You should not plan to request more than five days in any one rotation. As with doctoral staff, leave requests must be coordinated with patient-care needs and the leave requests of other staff. Planned leave must be entered into the VATAS system 6 weeks prior to taking for approval.

With the approval of the current rotation supervisor and the Training Director, each Intern may be allocated up to five (5) days of authorized Administrative absence (LN - Administrative) for educational purposes (e.g. conferences, institution approved research

presentations, VHA interviews, dissertation defense etc...) as per VA Handbook 5011, Part III, Chapter 2, Section 12 which states that employees, including trainees, may be given authorized Administrative absence without charge to leave when the activity is considered to be of substantial benefit to VA in accomplishing its general mission or one of its specific functions, such as education and training. While LN leave may be approved at the service level, it is up to the discretion of HR and the Director to finalize approval. Ultimately, it is your responsibility to plan for and use your leave appropriately. For example, if you wish to use a significant block of annual leave during the fall-winter holiday season, you should avoid using this type of leave early in the Internship. If you want to be able to take leave later in the Internship to interview for jobs or postdoctoral fellowship positions, then be sure to save some annual leave for this purpose in the event that LN is not available or approved at the facility level.

At the service level, the Training Committee and Training Director have the right to deny requests for LN if it is likely to have a negative effect on the course of training. Authorized Administrative absence for travel time is limited and must be approved separately. Further, Interns are responsible for all expenses associated with off-station training activities.

All leave requests should be entered electronically in advance and require approval by the Assistant Chief, Mental Health & Behavioral Sciences Service (MH&BSS). In addition, an informational e-mail with dates and times of the leave request, forwarded through your rotation supervisor, should be submitted to the Director of Training. If you are unable to report to work because of illness or emergency, you must CALL the service Secretary before, but no later than one hour prior to your scheduled duty time, as well as notify your Primary Supervisor and the Director of Training. An electronic leave request for unanticipated leave must be completed on the same day as your return.

### **Holidays:**

There are eleven federal holidays during the Internship year. Staff and Interns typically do not work on these dates:

Labor Day	Columbus Day	Veterans Day	Thanksgiving
Christmas	New Year's	Martin Luther King Day	President's Day
Memorial Day		Independence Day	Juneteenth

### **Supervised Duty Hours:**

Normal duty hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. for all Psychology Section staff. Interns may choose to work at their desks before and/or after duty hours but may not provide clinical services to patients unless an identified supervisor is available on site for consultation. When a supervisor is on leave, another staff member will be assigned to provide consultation and supervision of all clinical duties. All staff are required to wear their photo ID badge while on station. Lunch periods are typically scheduled for thirty minutes between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. On-station meals are available through the on campus Canteen. Due to scheduling constraints, Interns and Staff often choose to meet during the lunch period and "carry in" lunches. You are required to notify your supervisor if you anticipate leaving station.

### **Outside Professional Activities:**

Interns will not be allowed to participate in any other outside professional activities without first receiving permission from the Training Committee. Clinical service to the public for fee will not be allowed. Supervised clinical service of a training nature will be considered, as well as funded teaching or research positions on non-duty time. All other activities will be considered on an individual basis. In general, direct clinical service to the public in other than a training relationship will not be allowed.

### **Administrative Support:**

Our service has administrative staff that provide limited assistance to the Psychology Training Programs. General supplies, fax, scanner and a copy machine are located within the various MH sections for easy access. Please be aware that supplies, mailing materials and copier access are to be used only in direct support of patient care and current training activities. Use of VA letterhead and envelopes for other than official business is strictly prohibited and carries serious consequences. If in doubt, please consult your supervisor or the Director of Training.

### **MH Psychological Testing Library and Mental Health Assistant Package:**

On-line administration and scoring of numerous self-report inventories and questionnaires is available to Staff Psychologists and Interns via the Mental Health Assistance Package. The Mental Health Assistance Package gives Staff Psychologists and Interns access to a range of psychological tests (e.g. MMPI-2, MMPI2-RF, PAI, MCMI-IV etc.), allowing on-site administration to patients in various areas of the facility. Interns have access to over 400 paper-pencil cognitive and psychological tests available for check out from the Mental Health Psychology Test Library. Protocols, test stimuli, and interpretative manuals are available (e.g. WAIS-IV, WMS-IV, RBANS, Neuropsychological tests...). In addition, Interns rotating through any program have access to psychometrist services for the administration and scoring of select personality and cognitive tests.

### **Library Resources:**

There are separate libraries for consumer health/patient education (Patient Education Resource Center) and for clinical professional needs (Medical Library). The Medical Library collection consists of over 400 journal (print) subscriptions and approximately 5,000 books and audiovisual titles. Books and audiovisuals are available for a two-week checkout period with renewal options available. Print journals are for in-house use only but there is also an extensive online journal collection with many of them being full-text available and evidence-based. In addition there is onsite access to many of the leading medical, nursing, and psychiatric databases. These include (but not limited to) PubMed, MD Consult, First Consult, CINAHL, Psychiatry Online, and UptoDate. PsychInfo, Health Business, and Cochrane.

The Medical Library has established a section containing materials on empirically supported psychological treatments. There are well-equipped computers (with Internet access and Microsoft Office products) available in the Medical Library. Internet use is restricted to educational needs and job-related activities. The Medical Librarian provides assistance with computer-based literature searches and orientation sessions to the



physical and online library resources. The Library offers assistance with reference requests, library instruction, and interlibrary loans. The interlibrary loans are limited to non-charging sources from across the United States unless approved by the Chief, Library Service. After-hours access to the Medical Library is restricted to individuals have a Bay Pines identification badge.

### **Emergency Procedures:**

The C.W. Bill Young VAMC - Bay Pines VA Healthcare System (BPVAHCS) has a number of different procedures for emergencies. During orientation and throughout the year, you will receive specific fire and safety training from BPVAHCS professionals. In addition, you will also receive procedural instructions regarding suicide threats, armed aggressors, bomb threats, and hurricane precautions. It is essential that you understand and retain this information for immediate recall if needed. In the event of a hurricane, Psychology staff may be required to return to station to assist with patient care needs.

### **Accidents:**

There are special requirements for reporting accidents that occur on station. You must report any accident or injury that occurs to your immediate Supervisor and Director of Training. Do this even if you do not feel that medical care is necessary. It is necessary to report to Employee Health on the day of the incident. It is also necessary to file an incident report. Your primary Supervisor or TD can assist you in this.

### **Employee Health:**

Information: The Occupational Health Service Unit at the Bay Pines VAHCS provides employees with first-aid treatment for minor illnesses to enable employees to remain at work. Antibiotics will not be prescribed. The Occupational Health Physician/designee will refer the employee to his/her private physician for all additional or definitive care.

Emergency treatment for non-job related serious illnesses may be given. If necessary, the employee may be hospitalized at Bay Pines until he/she is able to be moved to a private facility. Employees who receive such care and who are not entitled as beneficiaries of the VA or OWCP (worker's comp) will be charged for such services.

Procedure: As outlined in VAMC Memorandum "Occupational Health" 516-05-05-11: During normal duty hours (8:00 am – 4:30 pm), Supervisors will call Occupational Health or accompany an employee to the Occupational Health Unit. For any non-medical emergency occurring outside normal duty hours, employees will be referred to or accompanied to the Emergency Room. The Administrator on Duty (AOD) will report any employee injury to the Occupational Health Unit on the next business day for appropriate follow-up. Any potentially serious employee illness/accident will be referred to the Emergency Room.

In the case of occupational illness, the employee's condition will be evaluated by the Occupational Health Physician, who will then request that the employee seek definitive treatment through a private physician. Employee must make application (Form CA-2) directly to the Workers' Comp Program Manager (05).

Employees will be billed for unauthorized treatment/diagnostic services. Employee(s) who provide(s) false/misleading information to gain free prescription/ diagnostic services will be billed and may face disciplinary/adverse action. Those employees, who are veterans and wish to receive care as veterans, must apply for Ambulatory Care Services prior to receiving medical treatment.

Only emergencies (i.e., needle punctures, cuts, acute onset of illness, traumatic job injuries, etc.) will be fully evaluated and treated anytime during the work shift. Before departing station, if you are sent off duty by the personnel physician, you will need to contact your Supervisor and the Training Director.

### **Hurricanes, Weather Events and Disasters:**

The Office of Academic Affiliations has provided guidance related to trainees who may be impacted by significant weather events/disasters. Should an anticipated or unexpected weather event threaten our area the Bay Pines Training Program will assist trainees in the following ways to minimize the impact on training:

#### **Coping and access to information and resources:**

We recognize that Trainees are often new to our geographic region and may be disconnected from their normal social support network. The Training Director will provide trainees information on storm safety and resources (local and facility based). The Employee Assistance Program is available should a Trainee experience significant stress from an event. Cellular phones are often the first communication systems to be lost in a storm, but they are also the first system to be restored. Trainees will be provided with the cellular number of the Training Director to report their status following the storm.

#### **Mandatory evacuations/clinic closure:**

Psychology Interns may be considered for Authorized Absence coded as Weather/Safety Leave.

Training Director and/or Supervisors may provide trainees with readings and other supplemental assignments to complete while on authorized absence. This may enable trainees to continue to documenting and accumulating formal training hours.

#### **After the storm/event – challenges to safe housing/transportation:**

If the facility reopens but a Trainee is unable to immediately report for duty at the facility subsequent to storm impacts, the following steps should be taken:

- The Trainee should contact their Training Director and Clinical Supervisors.
- The Trainee should use all available leave (AL and SL).
- When leave is exhausted, the trainee may request advanced leave through Human Resources, which will be earned during the remainder of their training appointment.
- When all available leave is exhausted, and/or no advanced leave is available, the Training Director may contact OAA for further guidance. In special situations, they will recommend that the trainee go on Leave Without Pay status. Discussions between the Trainee, the University affiliate DCT and the Internship Training Director should occur to insure that the Trainee will have the opportunity to meet hours requirements. This may occur as an extension to the training year on a WOP

status, or on a limited basis and with pre-approval, OAA may offer training appointment extensions with stipend, to allow Trainees complete required training hours for graduation and licensure requirements.

### **Liability Insurance:**

While performing your duties as a Psychology Intern at the Bay Pines VAHCS, Interns are afforded full coverage under the Federal Tort Claims Act for any acts of negligence occurring during performance of their role at this medical center.

All faculty members and trainees of the sponsoring institutions, when at VA health care facilities or on VA assignment at offsite facilities and while furnishing professional services covered by this agreement, will have personal liability protection by the provisions of the Federal Employees Liability Reform and Tort Compensation Act, 28 U.S.C. 2679 (b)-(d).

The Federal Employees Liability Reform and Tort Compensation Act of 1988, Public Law 100-694 (amending 28 U.S.C. 2679(b) and 2679(d)), provides that the exclusive remedy for damage or loss of property, or personal injury or death arising from the negligent or wrongful acts or omissions of all Federal employees, acting within the scope of their employment, will be against the United States. Thus contracted Psychology trainees from affiliated educational programs will be protected from personal liability afforded to all VA Psychology staff under those stated provisions.

### **Programs Statement on Non-Discrimination:**

Federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age and disability. The BPVAHCS Psychology Internship Program extends this definition to mean that no information about the applicants irrelevant to the applicants potential to succeed in the training program is to be utilized in its selection process.

During the year of Internship training, should there be an instance of discrimination experienced or observed by trainees or staff, there is a positive obligation to address the problem so as to minimize psychological harm. Interns are encouraged to consult with their Clinical Supervisor, Research Mentor, Assistant Chief of MH&BSS or Training Director for assistance in such matters.

Where this level of resolution is not effective or the instances are systemic, Interns as well as staff have access to formal procedures (see referenced Medical Center Policies and Procedures at the end of this Handbook). The local BPVAHCS EEO Program Manager is Tanya Weick and she is available for any assistance, consultation or to assist in any employee's exercise of their rights.

### **Programs Statement on Diversity**

The Department of Veterans Affairs and its component agencies seek to serve the veteran population, which is their charge from the Congress and thus from the American people who elect them. The composition and diversity of the veteran population seeking healthcare from the VA reflect a multiplicity of factors that define American society. People who join the Armed Forces represent a large cross section of that society, and the veteran population who have served their country and are enrolled for health care as a

benefit from their service, represent a diverse group defined by that cross section. The BPVAHCS Psychology Internship Program seeks to have a diverse staff and trainee population along many dimensions, since the need to bring care that represents the dignity and uniqueness of all VA patients is an organizational mandate that reflects VA values.

The program operates to teach the trainee to identify all the aspects of human diversity (i.e. individual differences) and to bring a heightened awareness of these elements of personhood into their psychological conceptualization and actions. The program staff searches for and aggressively takes opportunities to teach the importance of human diversity and individual differences in real time, as they occur continuously in clinical practice. Interns are encouraged to question and explore themselves the elements of diversity as they affect human behavior. Discussions with staff regarding the provision of psychological services in the context of human diversity are strongly encouraged, as both staff and Interns benefit from increased awareness, understanding, and study of human diversity; it is the patient who has the greatest potential benefit.

### **Filing an EEO Complaint:**

As an Intern, you are protected from acts of discrimination by employees and patients. If you believe you have been discriminated against because of your race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation and gender identity), national origin, age (40 years and over), physical or mental disability, genetic information, and/or retaliation, you can use the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) discrimination complaint process. You are also protected from filing a complaint (No Fear Act) and whistleblowing.

### **Employee Assistance Program**

Bay Pines recognizes its employees as one of its most valuable resources. While everyone experiences stress, sometimes the effects of too much stress can disrupt work performance and personal well-being. The EAP and WorkLife Service is designed to help you and your family members deal with problems before they become unmanageable.

Services available to employees through LifeServices EAP include, but are not limited to:

- Personal Counseling
- Family Counseling
- Financial Counseling
- Financial Information and Resources
- Legal Support and Resources
- Work-Life Solutions
- And more

Additional Information can be found by contacting LifeServices EAP directly:

- 1-800-822-4847 or visit [www.lifeserviceseap.com](http://www.lifeserviceseap.com)
- To access the LifeServices EAP online orientation, please visit:  
[www.lifeserviceseap.com/employees-family/orientation.php](http://www.lifeserviceseap.com/employees-family/orientation.php)

### **Ethical Conduct:**

The Bay Pines VA HCS Health Service Psychology Internship Training Program strives to produce an atmosphere of mutual respect, ethical practice and professionalism as guided by the American Psychological Association's Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code



of Conduct (APA, 2012). Please review the content of the attached 2012 revision of the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct which is available online at <http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx>

### **Clinical Experience Log:**

Each Intern is required to maintain a detailed, weekly log of patient contact services involving assessments, consultations, therapy, staffing, treatment planning, supervision and administrative and preparatory activities. This log is entered and maintained in EXCELL and will be compared to generated reports documenting co-signed therapy and assessment notes in CPRS. This log serves to document exact clinical care activities and the range of experiences acquired on a particular rotation. The second purpose of this log is to provide you with “hard” copy of your experiences should you need later references for various State Licensing and professional credentialing activities. Additionally, the Interns will be instructed to maintain documentation within the log of any required administrative, clinical, research or preparatory activities conducted outside of regular tour hours (e.g. preparatory readings for journal club, meetings held during the lunch hour). These data should be maintained regularly and kept indefinitely for future State Licensure documentation purposes. The contents of the log will be monitored by the Training Director and Assistant Chief of MH&BSS to ensure you have an adequate number of cases and a diverse workload. Clinical Experience Logs are required to be up to date no later the end of rotation period for each quarter. Delinquencies in maintaining logs will be documented in your Professional Values, Attitudes and Behaviors Competency section of your end of rotation evaluation by the TD.

### **DUE PROCESS, REMEDIATION OF PROBLEMATIC INTERN PERFORMANCE, AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

This section provides a definition of problematic Intern performance and how these situations are handled by the program, as well as a discussion of due process and grievance procedures.

The Internship program follows due process guidelines to assure that decisions are fair and nondiscriminatory. During Orientation with the Training Director, the Interns review and discuss written information regarding Expected performance and conduct; The evaluation process, including the format and schedule of evaluations; Procedures for making decisions about problematic performance and/or conduct; Remediation plans for identified problems, including time frames and consequences for failure to rectify problems and Procedures for appealing the program's decisions or actions. At the end of orientation, Interns sign a form indicating that they have read and understood these policies.

### **Problematic Intern Performance and/or Conduct:**

The program has established procedures for identifying, assessing, and, if necessary, remediating problematic Intern performance.

#### **Definition of Problematic Behaviors**

Problematic behaviors are broadly defined as those behaviors that disrupt the Intern's professional role and ability to perform required job duties, including the quality of: the Intern's clinical services; his or her relationships with peers, Supervisors, or other staff;

and his or her ability to comply with appropriate standards of professional and/or ethical behavior. Problematic behaviors may be the result of the Intern's inability or unwillingness to a) acquire professional standards and skills that reach an acceptable level of competency, or b) to control personal issues or stress.

Behaviors reach a problematic level when they include one or more of the following characteristics:

- The Intern does not acknowledge, understand, or address the problem.
- The problem is not merely a deficit in skills, which could be rectified by further instruction and training.
- The Intern's behavior does not improve as a function of feedback, remediation, effort, and/or time.
- The professional services provided by the Intern are negatively affected.
- The problem affects more than one area of professional functioning.
- The problem requires a disproportionate amount of attention from training Supervisors.

Some examples of problematic behaviors include:

- Engaging in dual role relationships.
- Violating patient confidentiality.
- Failure to respect appropriate boundaries.
- Failure to identify and report patients' high risk behaviors.
- Failure to complete written work in accordance with supervisor and/or program guidelines.
- Treating patients, peers, and/or Supervisors in a disrespectful or unprofessional manner.
- Plagiarizing the work of others or giving one's work to others to complete.
- Repeated tardiness.
- Unauthorized absences.

NOTE: this list is not exhaustive. Problematic behaviors also include behaviors discouraged or prohibited by APA's Ethical Guidelines, state and federal law and national VHA policies and procedures.

### **Remediation of Problematic Performance and/or Conduct:**

It should be noted that every effort is made to create a climate of access and collegiality within the service. The Training Director is actively involved in monitoring the training program and frequently checks informally with Interns and Supervisors regarding Interns' progress and potential problems. In addition, Training Committee Primary Supervisors are required to meet once a month in a Supervision of Supervision Seminar, which provides an additional forum to address Intern performance and to allow for discovery and resolution of potential problems. Supervisors discuss skills and areas of strength, as well as concerns regarding clinical or professional performance and conduct. Interns also receive direct feedback from their Primary Supervisors in the form of both formal and informal evaluations that occur at regularly scheduled intervals throughout the year. All

written evaluations become a part of the Intern's permanent file with the Psychology Section. These records are maintained by the Training Director and are kept in a secure, locked cabinet. The Training Director also communicates with graduate programs about each Intern's progress while on Internship. This occurs, at minimum, at mid-year and again at year's end.

Interns are encouraged to raise concerns with the Training Director as they arise. It is our goal to help each Intern reach his/her full potential as a developing professional. Supervisory feedback that facilitates such professional growth is essential to achieving this goal. Interns are continuously evaluated and informed about their performance with regard to the training goals and objectives of the program. It is hoped that Interns and Supervisors establish a working professional relationship in which constructive feedback can be given and received. During the evaluation process, the Intern and supervisor discuss such feedback and, in most cases, reach a resolution about how to address any difficulties. Although Interns are formally evaluated at regular intervals (see previous section on the Evaluation Process), problematic behaviors may arise and need to be addressed at any given time.

If the Intern fails to meet expectations at the time of the written evaluation, or at any time a supervisor observes serious deficiencies which have not improved through ongoing supervision, procedures to address problematic performance and/or conduct would be implemented. These include:

- 1.) Supervisor meets with TD and/or Training Committee to assess the seriousness of Intern's deficient performance, probable causes, and actions to be taken. As part of this process, any deficient evaluation(s) are reviewed.
- 2.) After a thorough review of all available information, the TD, Supervisor and/or Training Committee may adopt one or more of the following steps, as appropriate:
  - A. No further action is warranted.
  - B. Informal Remediation – the supervisor(s) may seek the input of the Training Committee, ACOS and/or the Intern's graduate program and decide that the problem(s) are best dealt with in ongoing supervision.
  - C. Formal Remediation – This is a written statement issued to the Intern which includes the following information:
    - A description of the problematic behavior(s)
    - Documentation that the ACOS and Training Committee is aware of and concerned about the problematic behavior(s) and that this has been discussed with the Intern
    - A remediation plan to address the problem(s) within a specified time frame.

Remediation plans set clear objectives and identify procedures for meeting those objectives. Possible remedial steps include but are not limited to:

- Increased level of supervision, either with the same or other Supervisors.
- Additional readings.
- Changes in the format or areas of emphasis in supervision.
- Recommendation or requirement of personal therapy, including clear objectives which the therapy should address.
- Recommendation or requirement for further training to be undertaken.

Recommendation or requirement of a leave of absence (with time to be made up at no cost to the institution) .

Requirement that a rotation be repeated.

The Intern is also invited to provide a written statement regarding the identified problem(s). As outlined in the remediation plan, the supervisor, TD, and Intern will meet to discuss the Intern's progress at a specified reassessment date. As part of this process, the TD will contact the Intern's graduate program to notify them that Intern requires a formal remediation plan and will seek the program's input to the plan. The TD documents the outcome and gives written notification to the Intern and Supervisor(s) and ACOS. VA Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA) and the facility Chief of Service, and Education DEO and designee will also be notified when a formal remediation plan has been implemented and may be utilized by the program for further consultation. In certain cases, APPIC will be notified by the TD through the Informal Problem Consultation option.

### **Probation Notice:**

This step is implemented when problematic behavior(s) are deemed to be more serious by the Training Committee and/or when repeated efforts at remediation have not resolved the issue. The Intern will be given written statement that includes the following documentation:

A description of any previous efforts to rectify the problem(s)

Notification of and/or consultation with the Intern's graduate program regarding further courses of action

Specific recommendations for resolving the problem(s)

A specified time frame for the probation during which the problem is expected to be rectified and procedures for assessing this.

Again, as part of this process, the Intern is invited to provide a written statement regarding the identified problem(s). As outlined in the probation notice, the supervisor(s), TD, Intern, and a representative from the Intern's graduate program (optional) will meet to discuss Intern's progress at the end of the probationary period. The TD documents the outcome and gives written notification to Intern, Supervisor, and ACOS, OAA, Education Service DEO and designee, the graduate program, and the facility Chief of Human Resources.

### **Termination:**

If an Intern on Probation has not improved sufficiently under the conditions specified in the Probation Notice, termination will be discussed by the full Training Committee, ACOS and Service Chief, as well as with the Intern's graduate program, VA OAA, Education Service DEO and designee, APPIC and the facility HR Chief. In some cases, an Intern may choose to withdraw from the program rather than being terminated. The final decision regarding the Intern's passing is made by TD and Chief of Psychology, based on the input of the TC and other governing bodies, and all written evaluations and other documentation. This determination will occur no later than the May Training Committee meeting. If it is decided to terminate the Internship, the Intern will be informed in writing



by TD that he/she will not successfully complete the Internship. The Intern and his/her graduate program will be informed of the decision in writing.

All documentation related to the formal and informal remediation process becomes part of the Intern's permanent file with the Psychology Section. These records are maintained by the TD and are kept in a secure, locked cabinet.

**Unethical or Illegal Behavior:**

Any illegal or unethical conduct by an Intern must be brought to the attention of the TD as soon as possible. Any person who observes or suspects such behavior has the responsibility to report the incident. The TD will document the issue in writing, and consult with the appropriate parties, depending on the situation (see description below).

Infractions of a very minor nature may be resolved among the TD, the supervisor, and the Intern, as described above.

Examples of significant infractions include but are not limited to:

1. Violation of ethical standards for the discipline, for the training program, or for government employees.
2. Violation of VA regulations or applicable Federal, state, or local laws.
3. Disruptive, abusive, intimidating, or other behavior that disturbs the workplace environment or that interferes or might reasonably be expected to interfere with veteran care. Disruptive behaviors include profane or demeaning language, sexual comments or innuendo, outbursts of anger, throwing objects, serious boundary violations with staff or veterans, inappropriate health record entries, and unethical, illegal, or dishonest behavior.

Depending on the situation and the time sensitivity of the issues, the TD may consult with the Training Committee, ACOS, HR, Education Service, OAA, APPIC, or APA to get further information and/or guidance. Following review of the issues, the Training Committee may recommend either formal probation or termination of the Intern from the program.

Probationary status will be communicated to the Intern, his or her graduate program, ACOS, Education Service, HR, VA OAA, APA, and/or APPIC in writing and will specify all requisite guidelines for successful completion of the program. Any violations of the conditions outlined in the Probation Notice will result in the immediate termination of the Intern from the program.

The TD may consult with the Associate Chief of Staff for Mental Health, Human Resources, regional counsel, other members of hospital leadership (e.g., Privacy Officer, Safety Officer, EEO Officer, Chief of Staff, Facility Director, etc.), VHA OAA, APA, APPIC, and/or the Intern's graduate program in situations where there may be an ethical or criminal violation. Such infractions may be grounds for immediate dismissal. In addition, the TD may immediately put the Intern on administrative duties or on administrative leave while the situation is being investigated. Under certain circumstances, the Internship program may be required to alert our accrediting body (APA) and/or other professional organizations (e.g., APPIC, state licensing boards) regarding unethical or illegal behavior on the part of an Intern. If information regarding unethical or illegal behavior is reported

by the Intern's graduate program, the Internship program may have to follow their policies and procedures regarding clinical duties, probation, and/or termination.

As described in the previous section on remediation of problematic performance and/or conduct, at any stage of the process, the Intern may request assistance and/or consultation outside of the program and utilize the resources listed above.

All documentation related to serious infractions becomes part of the Intern's permanent file with the Psychology Division. These records are maintained by the TD and kept in a secure, locked cabinet.

Regrettably, you may observe poor professional conduct, disregard for hospital procedures/policies or possibly ethical or illegal misconduct on the part of another member of the hospital staff. Should this occur, seek immediate consultation from a member of the Psychology Staff to assist you with assessment, understanding and any subsequent action that may be indicated. Be aware that the hospital has mandatory reporting procedures for patient abuse/exploitation.

#### **Grievance:**

Although infrequent, differences in perspective may arise between an Intern and a Supervisor or another staff member, which do not appear resolvable at the Supervisor/Staff-Intern level. Should this occur, the following procedures can be followed by an Intern:

1. The Intern will meet individually with the Training Director within 1 week of reporting grievance to discuss grievance and explore strategies to resolve disagreement/conflict/grievance at the Intern-Supervisor/Staff Member level. Should the conflict exist between the Intern and the Training Director serving as a Primary Supervisor on a research project or within a rotation, the Intern will meet individually with the Postdoctoral Training Director or Assistant Chief of MH&BSS. If grievance cannot be satisfactorily resolved by all parties at this level within 10 working days...
2. The Intern and Supervisor will meet with the Training Director (or Postdoctoral TD or Assistant Chief of MH&BSS if required due to Internship TD conflict ) to allow assessment of the problem. If satisfactory resolution has not been reached within 10 working days....
3. The Intern and Supervisor will meet with the Executive Steering Committee, made up of the Internship Training Director, Postdoctoral Training Director, Practica Training Director and Assistant Chief of MH&BSS to attempt to develop a workable solution. If satisfactory resolution has not been reached within 10 working days....
4. The Supervisor and Intern will meet with a fully convened Psychology Training Committee. The Committee as a whole, will then attempt to develop a workable solution. If satisfactory resolution has not been reached within 10 working days....
5. The Supervisor and Intern will meet with the Assistant Chief, Mental Health & Behavioral Sciences Service (MH&BSS) who will review all pertinent data and make a final

determination. If the Assistant Chief, Mental Health & Behavioral Sciences Service's decisions are unacceptable to either individual, the Assistant Chief, (MH&BSS) will outline any further options available as per local and VHA policy.

At any stage of the process, an Intern may request additional assistance and/or consultation; please see section below on grievances. Interns may also request assistance and/or consultation outside of the program. Resources for outside consultation include:

**VA Office of Resolution Management (ORM):**

Department of Veterans Affairs  
Office of Resolution Management (08)  
810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420  
1-202-501-2800 or Toll Free 1-888- 737-3361  
<http://www4.va.gov/orm/>

This department within the VA has responsibility for providing a variety of services and programs to prevent, resolve, and process workplace disputes in a timely and high quality manner. These services and programs include:

Prevention: programs that insure that employees and managers understand the characteristics of a healthy work environment and have the tools to address workplace disputes.

Early Resolution: ORM serves as a resource for the resolution of workplace disputes. ORM has been designated as the lead organization for workplace alternative dispute resolution (ADR) within VA. This form of mediation available to all VA employees. Mediation is a process in which an impartial person, the mediator, helps people having a dispute to talk with each other and resolve their differences. The mediator does not decide who is right or wrong but rather assists the persons involved create their own unique solution to their problem. VA mediators are fellow VA employees who have voluntarily agreed to mediate workplace disputes. They are specially trained and skilled in mediation techniques and conflict resolution. In electing to use mediation, an employee does not give up any other rights.

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Complaint Processing

**Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC):**

APPIC has established both an Informal Problem Consultation process and a Formal Complaint process in order to address issues and concerns that may arise during the Internship training year. <http://appic.org/Problem-Consultation>

Informal Problem Consultation (IPC) Jason Williams, Psy.D. (720) 777-8108  
Chair, APPIC Board of Directors  
Formal Complaints Elihu Turkel, Ph.D.  
Chair, APPIC Standards and Review Committee  
[turkel@lij.edu](mailto:turkel@lij.edu)

**APA Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation:**

750 First Street, NE

Washington, DC 20002-4242  
(202) 336-5979  
<http://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation>

### **Independent legal counsel**

Please note that union representation is not available to Interns as they are not union members under conditions of their VA term-appointment.

### **PREVIOUS TRAINEES**

Applications are encouraged from all geographical areas. In previous years, Interns have been enrolled from a variety of University and professional school settings throughout the United States including, University of South Florida, Ohio State University, Auburn University, Florida Institute of Technology, Drexel University, University of South Carolina, Texas Tech. University, University of Minnesota, Adelphi University, University of Mississippi, the Virginia Consortium, University of Florida, Georgia State University, University of California, Santa Barbara, Hahnemann University, Ohio University, University of Connecticut, University of Denver, University of Southern Mississippi, University of Georgia, Penn State University, Indiana State University, University of South Dakota, Wright State University, University of Louisville, University of Miami, University of Missouri - St Louis, Argosy University – Atlanta, Argosy University - Washington, DC., Loma Linda University, University of Texas at Austin, Lehigh University, LaSalle University - PA, Regent University - Virginia Beach, Pacific Graduate School of Psychology – Palo Alto, Emory University, University of Tulsa, University of Indianapolis, University of Mississippi, Alliant Int'l University/California School of Professional Psychology – San Francisco, University of Houston, Virginia Commonwealth University, Spalding University, Wright Institute, University of Central Florida, Virginia Tech, Fuller Theological Seminary, Nova Southeastern University, Southern Methodist University, Central Michigan University, Idaho State University, Spalding University, William James College, University of Tulsa, University of Memphis, Northern Illinois University, Western Michigan University, Long Island University; Yeshiva University - Ferkauf, Adler University Chicago, Northern Illinois University, University of Tennessee-Knoxville, Seattle Pacific University, Washington State University; University of Maryland; University of Georgia; National Louis University; St Mary's University; Idaho State University, Chaminade - University of Honolulu, Saint Mary's University of Minnesota.

Such diversity in training, theoretical perspectives, cultural experiences, and interests enhances our program and ensures both challenging and valuable professional growth for our Interns.

### **GRADUATES OF BAY PINES INTERNSHIP**

Of particular interest to applicants is the successful transition of our graduating Interns to professional positions. Former Interns are now employed in a variety of institutional and private practice settings in the Tampa Bay area, as well as in several other areas of the country. In addition, most of our Interns have elected to complete formal post-doctoral fellowships after completion of their Internships and our Interns have been very successful in obtaining fellowships in competitive programs across the country.



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## Internship Admissions, Support, and Initial Placement Data

Date Program Tables are updated: 01/25/2022

### Program Disclosures

<b>Does the program or institution require students, trainees, and/or staff (faculty) to comply with specific policies or practices related to the institution's affiliation or purpose? Such policies or practices may include, but are not limited to, admissions, hiring, retention policies, and/or requirements for completion that express mission and values?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>If yes, provide website link (or content from brochure) where this specific information is presented:</b>	
N/A	

### Internship Program Admissions

<b>Briefly describe in narrative form important information to assist potential applicants in assessing their likely fit with your program. This description must be consistent with the program's policies on intern selection and practicum and academic preparation requirements:</b>
We are recruiting doctoral level graduate school applicants with solid foundational training and practica experience in both intervention and assessment, who are interested in learning and are motivated to develop professional competencies in the practice of psychology during the internship year. We adhere to a Scholar-Practitioner model which supports the mutual integration of science and practice by promoting a scientific attitude and approach to clinical activities. The training focus is on direct clinical work that is informed by evidenced based practice. It is our goal to expose interns to a diverse patient population, offer supervision and training in multiple intervention and assessment techniques, models, and theoretical viewpoints, all supported by the relevant scientific literature. Based upon this

philosophy, interns receive broad, comprehensive training in preparation for entry-level, generalist practice in professional psychology.

**Does the program require that applicants have received a minimum number of hours of the following at time of application? If Yes, indicate how many:**

Total Direct Contact Intervention Hours	YES=1	0	Amount: 250
Total Direct Contact Assessment Hours	YES=1	0	Amount: 250

**Describe any other required minimum criteria used to screen applicants:**

Our initial screening procedures of the applicants AAPI include a review of graduate program accreditation status, approval by DOT to apply to internship, combined hours of assessment and intervention experience already accrued and anticipated, the ratio of individual supervision to group supervision hours, number of integrated reports written and diversity characteristics of the applicant.

In addition, because interns are considered Federal employees, we screen for the following federal hiring requirements:

1. U.S. citizenship. VA is unable to consider applications from anyone who is not currently a U.S. citizen. Verification of citizenship is required following selection.
2. A male applicant born after 12/31/1959 must have registered for the draft by age 26 to be eligible for any US government employment, including selection as a paid VA trainee.

### **Financial and Other Benefit Support for Upcoming Training Year\***

Annual Stipend/Salary for Full-time Interns	\$26,297	
Annual Stipend/Salary for Half-time Interns	N/A	
Program provides access to medical insurance for intern?	Yes=1	0
<b>If access to medical insurance is provided:</b>		
Trainee contribution to cost required?	Yes=1	0
Coverage of family member(s) available?	Yes=1	0
Coverage of legally married partner available?	Yes=1	0
Coverage of domestic partner available?	0	No=1
Hours of Annual Paid Personal Time Off (PTO and/or Vacation)	4 hours per pay period	
Hours of Annual Paid Sick Leave	4 hours per pay period	
In the event of medical conditions and/or family needs that require extended leave, does the program allow reasonable unpaid leave to interns/residents in excess of personal time off and sick leave?	Yes=1	0
Other Benefits (please describe): 11 Federal Holidays off; 5 days authorized absence for approved professional activities (e.g., conferences, workshops, etc.)		

\*Note. Programs are not required by the Commission on Accreditation to provide all benefits listed in this table

## Initial Post-Internship Positions

(Provide an Aggregated Tally for the Preceding 3 Cohorts)

	2017-2020	
Total # of interns who were in the 3 cohorts	21	
Total # of interns who did not seek employment because they returned to their doctoral program/are completing doctoral degree	1	
	PD	EP
Academic teaching	0	0
Community mental health center	0	0
Consortium	0	0
University Counseling Center	0	0
Hospital/Medical Center	6	0
Veterans Affairs Health Care System	13	0
Psychiatric facility	0	0
Correctional facility	0	0
Health maintenance organization	0	0
School district/system	0	0
Independent practice setting	0	1
Other	0	0

Note: "PD" = Post-doctoral residency position; "EP" = Employed Position. Each individual represented in this table should be counted only one time. For former trainees working in more than one setting, select the setting that represents their primary position.

## TRAINING ENVIRONMENT



### **Living Environment:**

The Bay Pines VA Health Care System is in Bay Pines, Florida, close to the major cities of St. Petersburg and Tampa in what is called, the Tampa Bay area. The 2010 Census states Tampa is third largest city in the Southeastern United States, behind Miami and Atlanta. The "Greater Tampa Bay" area has just over 4 million residents and generally includes the Tampa and Sarasota metro areas. St. Petersburg, which is located roughly 15 minutes from Tampa on the opposite side of the Bay, is the fourth largest city in the state of Florida, which is home to roughly 4 million residents. Census 2006 data revealed the median income for a household for the Tampa Bay area is \$39,602. English as a first language accounted for 77.43% of all residents, while Spanish accounted for 17.76%. The Tampa Bay area provides an array of cultural opportunities including numerous festivals, LGBTQ events, music venues, advocacy groups and involvement in Political and faith communities.

### **Weather**

With a purported average of some 360 days of sunshine each year, Tampa is nicknamed "The Sunshine City." For that reason, the city and surrounding area of St. Pete is a popular tourist, and retirement destination, especially for those in the United States from colder Northern climates – particularly New York City, Detroit, and Chicago. The Tampa Bay Area has a humid subtropical climate with a definite rainy season from June through September and the area is occasionally visited by tropical storms and hurricanes. The last time a hurricane directly struck the area was in 1921. Many portions of the area, especially along the bay and in south St. Petersburg have tropical microclimates. Royal palms and coconut



palms, as well as other tropicals, grow to maturity and fruit. Average temperatures range from 54 to 90, with the warmest months during the summer.

### **Schools**

Tampa hosts several well-known colleges and university, including the University of South Florida, Tampa University, Florida Metropolitan and Stetson school of law among others. St. Petersburg has a branch of the state university, as well as St. Petersburg College and Eckerd College. The Poynter Institute, a school for journalists, future journalists and teachers of journalism, is also located in St. Petersburg.

### **Beaches and Parks**

The Tampa Bay area is home to more than a dozen Florida State Parks and Historic Sites including Caladesi Island State Park, recently named America's top beach destination by Dr. Beach and known to beachcombers as a shell-seeker's paradise; Hillsborough River State Park in Hillsborough County, where the river tumbles over outcroppings of Suwannee limestone, creating a series of rapids; and Myakka River State Park in Sarasota County, one of the state's largest parks, which hikers can venture through pine flatwoods, over marsh and swamp and across a dry prairie.

St Pete area hosts numerous parks and the Pinellas Trail a 34-mile-long trail where one can safely enjoy bicycle riding, strolling or jogging. The Pinellas Trail is truly one of Florida's premier urban trails. Stretching from Tarpon Springs to St. Petersburg, the trail links some of Pinellas County's most picturesque parks, scenic coastal areas and residential neighborhoods. Boyd Hill Nature Park located on Lake Maggiore is a 245-acre (0.99 km<sup>2</sup>) preserve where you can see many of the endangered plants and rare wildlife of Tampa bay. There is a bird exhibit which houses bald eagles, owls, hawks, and other species. St. Petersburg is well regarded for its beaches. In 2005, Fort Desoto was rated the number one beach in America by the annual Dr. Beach rankings. Trip Advisor also has the beach ranked number one in the nation for 2008. Recently, St. Petersburg has become known and regarded as one of America's most livable cities.

### **Travel**

Tampa International Airport provides air transportation for most passengers. Smaller airlines, with destinations to smaller cities and towns, operate at St. Petersburg-Clearwater International Airport, with most tenants providing only seasonal services. Orlando and Sarasota offer major airports as well and are within 1 ½ hours driving time from the Tampa Bay area.

Amtrak services Tampa via the Tampa Union Train Station, located in a historic building near the port between downtown and Ybor City. The Silver Star reverses its direction at Tampa Union Station on its way between Miami and New York.

The Port of Tampa is located downtown and hosts several cruise lines.

### **Mass Transit**

The Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART) operates streetcars as well as the bus system in Tampa. HART has a signed transit deal with the University of South

Florida, allowing students to ride for free on most bus routes.[89] In addition, students from several other colleges and universities can purchase passes at half price from their school. The TECO Line Streetcar System, which links Ybor City, the Channel District and Downtown Tampa. Mass transit in St. Pete is provided by the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA). There is also a sightseeing trolley, called The Looper that travels to key downtown destinations daily.

## **TAMPA BAY REGION ART AND CULTURAL COMMUNITY EVENTS**

Florida's temperate climate and population diversity makes it a natural venue for many fun, and educational outdoor events and community cultural events, especially those that celebrate the state's sizable Hispanic and Caribbean populations. Moving to the Tampa Bay region won't disappoint! You can experience and celebrate Florida's unique cultural makeup and contributions – through music, film, presentations, parades, festivals and more. Here are a few of our monthly and seasonal opportunities!

### **JANUARY EVENTS**

**Tampa Bay Black Heritage Festival**

This ten-day African-American festival ushers in the Martin Luther King Holiday Weekend in Tampa Bay, a vibrant region that embodies diversity. It highlights the contributions of African Americans in the U.S. and how they've impacted the country. It includes live entertainment, cultural events, health tutorials, business seminars, renowned speakers, food and craft vendors, plus a music fest featuring national recording artists.

Where: Tampa

Web: [tampablackheritage.org](http://tampablackheritage.org)

**Tocobaga Indian Mound in Philippe Park** - On the shores of Old Tampa Bay, Safety Harbor Mound resides behind shelter #2 at Philippe Park, where you can climb to the top of the ancient structure. Nearby Safety Harbor Museum of Regional History, located on the site of a Tocobaga Indian mound, displays artifacts that were found in it, dating back to the Safety Harbor culture, 1500 to 1700 A.D.

Where: Safety Harbor, year round

**Weedon Island Preserve Cultural and Natural History Center** - "Weeden Island culture," dated from A.D. 200 to 900, was first identified at Weedon Island Preserve, leaving sherds of pottery and other proof of existence in shell mounds excavated by the Smithsonian Institution in the 1920s.

Where: St Petersburg, year round

**"CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR!" HOLIDAY HOME TOUR** - Elaborate, elegant, over-the-top designer Christmas decorations in one of Florida's most historic mansions. The 1886 "Gilded Age" Victorian Stetson Mansion has been recently been listed as one of the "Top 10 Things to do in Florida" by Tripadvisor. Reservations required.

Where: Stetson Mansion, 1031 Camphor Ln, DeLand, FL 32720

Web: [stetsonmansion.com/](http://stetsonmansion.com/)

**GASPARILLA PIRATE FEST** – Visitors from all over the country swoop in to celebrate as bead-wielding pirates invade the City of Tampa, beginning with a boat parade and brunch, a parade along Bayshore Boulevard and a street festival that draws thousands.

Where: Multiple locations in Tampa  
Web: [gasparillaextravaganza.com](http://gasparillaextravaganza.com)

COLOR IN MOTION 5K – Begin at the starting line in white clothing and finish covered in splashes of vibrant pink, green, yellow, blue and orange. Join others in this moving rainbow of fitness to stay on top of your New Year’s resolution goals.

Where: Artegon Marketplace, Orlando  
Web: [colorinmotion5k.com/Orlando](http://colorinmotion5k.com/Orlando)

MANATEE COUNTY FAIR – This 11-day fun-fest recently turned 100 and features first class stage shows, national concert acts, midway rides, livestock shows, auctions, competitions, tons of kids activities and of course, lots of corn dogs and cotton candy and other tasty fair food.

Where: Manatee County Fairgrounds, Palmetto  
Web: [manateecountyfair.com](http://manateecountyfair.com)

FELLSMERE FROG LEG FESTIVAL – Hop on over to this annual event with 80,000 other folks. Highlights include: yummy frog’s leg and gator tail dinners, frog jumping contests, hot legs contests, carnival rides, Red Neck Olympics (including Pig’s Feet Bobbin’) great live music and more than 100 booths featuring the work of unique craftsmen and artisans.

Where: Fellsmere  
Web: [froglegfestival.com](http://froglegfestival.com)

MLK DAY NATIONAL PARADE – Thousands line the streets of St. Petersburg to cheer on booming marching bands, flamboyant dancing teams, colorful floats, waving politicians and other VIPs during what’s considered the oldest and largest MLK Day parade in the southeastern U.S.

Where: Downtown St. Petersburg  
Web: [spmlkparade.com](http://spmlkparade.com)

FLORIDA MANATEE FESTIVAL – Celebrate Florida’s beloved gentle giant with arts and crafts, live music, a beer garden and live manatee viewing at the nearby Three Sisters Spring. The event is a favorite among locals as it grows and adds attractions each year.

Where: Downtown Crystal River  
Web: [gomanateefest.com](http://gomanateefest.com)

THE DRAGON FESTIVAL – Part Renaissance Fest and part Highland Games, this event honors a mythical dragon with two days of music, storytelling, jousting, jugglers, tomato-throwing, horse shoe games, ladder climb competitions, fortune telling, sword, archery displays and other shenanigans.

Where: Wickham Pavilion, Melbourne  
Web: [thedragonfestival.com](http://thedragonfestival.com)

ZORA NEALE HURSTON FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS & HUMANITIES – Set in the birthplace of Harlem Renaissance writer and cultural icon Zora Neale Hurston, fans celebrate her legacy and birthday through readings, music and other programs.

Where: Eatonville

Web: [zorafestival.org](http://zorafestival.org)

**PIGS IN Z'HILLS BBQ & BLUES FEST** – BBQ connoisseurs, competitors, musicians, car buffs and history and aviation enthusiasts return to feast on award-winning dishes while they enjoy live blues, kids' activities, aircraft and military history displays, classic cars, a business expo and more.

Where: Zephyrhills Municipal Airport, Zephyrhills

Web: [facebook.com/PigzBBQBlues](https://facebook.com/PigzBBQBlues)

**TAMPA BAY BLACK HERITAGE FESTIVAL** – Celebrate African-American history and culture with 10 days of music, dancing, cultural events, business seminars, food, health tutorials, and uplifting speakers. The event's two-day music fest features national performers and is surrounded by "villages" showcasing artists, authors and children's activities.

Where: Multiple locations in Tampa

Web: [tampablackheritage.org](http://tampablackheritage.org)

**DESOTO COUNTY FAIR** – Florida's heartland puts on the ultimate county fair, complete with judged exhibits for beef, swine, rabbits, poultry and goats. The longtime fair – nearly 60 years running – also has carnival rides, cotton candy and corn dogs, arts and crafts booths and a pageant to crown the Fair Queen and Miss DeSoto County.

Where: Arcadia

Web: [desotocountyfair.org](http://desotocountyfair.org)

**SUNSHINE MUSIC FESTIVAL** – Chill out in St. Petersburg's breezy waterfront park and listen to folksy rock tunes by nationally-known artists. Refresh at the wine bar, craft beer tent and food trucks.

Where: Vinoy Park, St. Petersburg

Web: [sunshinemusicfestival.com](http://sunshinemusicfestival.com)

**IMAGES: A FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS** – As one of the top outdoor art shows in the southeastern United States, IMAGES draws artist from all over the world to participate in its juried show. The park is filled with group and solo musicians, hands-on activities for kids and a food court.

Where: Riverside Park, New Smyrna Beach

Web: [imagesartfestival.org/](http://imagesartfestival.org/)

**TARPON SPRINGS EPIPHANY** – Every Jan. 6, Tarpon Springs' Greek community rallies around a chilly body of water and watch boys dive for the golden cross, thrown in by a Greek Orthodox Archbishop. The cross is said to bring good luck all year to he who retrieves it, and it's a tradition that has drawn onlookers and media coverage for decades.

Where: Spring Bayou, Tarpon Springs

Web: [visitstpeteclearwater.com/tarpon-springs-epiphany](http://visitstpeteclearwater.com/tarpon-springs-epiphany)

**CENTRAL FLORIDA SCOTTISH HIGHLAND GAMES** – Fans of Scottish heritage and culture, or simply just those who love to watch a good competition, will love this jam-packed



schedule of Highland dancing, bagpipes, archery, shortbread tasting, face painting and other Scot-centric fun.

Where: Central Winds Park, Winter Springs

Web: [flascot.com](http://flascot.com)

**SEMINOLE SUNCOAST WOOD CARVERS SHOW** – Woodcarvers of all skill levels and interests display and sell their pieces of work, which range from realistic-looking mounted game trophies to intricately engraved keepsake boxes to custom-made walking canes. Hobbyists can learn more at seminars and workshops.

Where: Seminole

Web: [suncoastwoodcarvers.com](http://suncoastwoodcarvers.com)

**VOLUSIA BEER WEEK** – Get to know some of Central Florida's finest and most unique craft beers by kicking off Volusia Beer Week on a bus tour. The bus will pick up in downtown DeLand and make six stops throughout the county to taste at various breweries. The week will continue with a lineup of events to help enlighten those with curious palates.

Where: Volusia County

## **FEBRUARY EVENTS**

**GRAPEFRUIT LEAGUE** – Florida's glorious winter and spring weather is best enjoyed while watching a spring training game (February through April) as 15 major league baseball teams get ready for the upcoming season.

Where: Multiple locations in central and South Florida, including Kissimmee, Tampa, Sarasota, Jupiter and Port St. Lucie

Web: [floridagrapefruitleague.com](http://floridagrapefruitleague.com)

**RAPTORFEST** – Learn everything you ever wanted to know about Florida's sly and skilled birds of prey at this fascinating fair, which includes live animal encounters, tree climbing, tram tours, kids' activities, art exhibits and a silent auction.

Where: Boyd Hill Nature Preserve, St. Petersburg

Web: [raptorfest.org](http://raptorfest.org)

**FLORIDA STATE FAIR** – Nearly a half a million people are drawn to the thrill rides, indulgent food and headline bands at the long-running Florida State Fair, which still awards prizes to prized livestock, best pies and most impressive quilts. Try the pizza cone or bacon ice cream. (But not before stepping on the Tilt-a-Whirl.)

Where: Florida State Fairgrounds, Tampa

Web: [floridastatefair.com](http://floridastatefair.com)

**CELTIC FAMILY JAMBOREE** – Bring the kids, dogs, RV and your own food and drinks to this sleepover campsite festival, a two-day party packed with Celtic folk bands, Highland games and workshops teaching everything from fiddle to Irish dance to yoga.

Where: Sertoma Youth Ranch, Brooksville

Web: [celticheritageproductions.com](http://celticheritageproductions.com)

**PASCO COUNTY FAIR** – Get a glimpse of Florida country living at the Pasco County Fair's pig races and bull and heifer show, along with days of quirky entertainment such as a sea

lion show, a hypnosis and comedy act, alligator displays, pageants and lots of spinning rides and sugary treats.

Where: Dade City

Web: [pascocountyfair.com](http://pascocountyfair.com)

**CLEARWATER BEACH UNCORKED** – Nationally acclaimed chefs wow guests with a pre-Valentine's smorgasbord of appetizers, entrée samplings, desserts, fine wine and microbrew beer. This is one of Clearwater Beach's biggest food and drink events of the year, drawing guests from all over the world.

Where: Clearwater Beach

Web: [clearwaterbeachuncorked.com](http://clearwaterbeachuncorked.com)

**PINE CASTLE PIONEER DAYS** – Local historians honor a piece of Central Florida history – The Pine Castle neighborhood between Orlando and Kissimmee – with a recreation of the area's turn-of-the-century events. Actors play out old dueling scenes and give history lessons, folk bands play, horse carriages give tours and vendors sell handcrafted wares.

Where: Cypress Grove Park, Orlando

Web: [pinecastlepioneerdays.org](http://pinecastlepioneerdays.org)

**BEER, BOURBON & BBQ FESTIVAL** – This tasty festival makes serves up pulled pork, brisket, sausages and sides, as well as all-you-care-to-drink beer and bourbon samples.

Also: a giant Jenga, trike races and cornhole competitions.

Where: Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park, Tampa

Web: [beerandbourbon.com](http://beerandbourbon.com)

**ZEPHYRHILLS AUTO EVENTS SWAP MEET** – Car lovers, collectors and families enjoy three days of classic cars on display, food and fun while gearing up for the popular auction featuring more than 300 antique, luxury, exotic, muscle and classic cars, as well as motorcycles and specialty trucks.

Where: Zephyrhills Festival Park, Zephyrhills

Web: [zephyrhillsautoevents.com](http://zephyrhillsautoevents.com)

**LOCALTOPIA** – Small and independent businesses showcase everything from smoothies to spa services and dog treats to mom and pop cafes. Artists and musicians entertain with exhibits and live music.

Where: Williams Park, downtown St. Petersburg

Web: [keepsaintpetersburglocal.org/localtopia](http://keepsaintpetersburglocal.org/localtopia)

**LEESBURG MARDI GRAS** – Leesburg paints the town purple and gold, capping off a week of mixers and events with a king and queen-crowning ball and family-friendly street festival. Three parades fill the streets with the finale, featuring stilt walkers, fire eaters, jugglers, costumed pets and, of course, lots and lots of beads.

Where: Downtown Leesburg

Web: [leesburgmardigras.com](http://leesburgmardigras.com)

**BAY AREA RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL** – A museum lot is transformed into a 16th Century village, complete with live armored jousting, dancing, juggling, archery, human chess

matches, artisans and minstrels, as well as marketplace vendor booths and old-time grub and refreshments.

Where: Museum of Science and Industry (MOSI), Tampa

Web: [bayarearenfest.com](http://bayarearenfest.com)

**ENTERPRISE CHILI COOK-OFF** – A quaint historic town holds its annual chili cook-off, offering several types of chili to hungry guests, with proceeds benefitting the town’s non-profit preservationist group.

Where: Enterprise Heritage Center, Enterprise

Web: [oldenterprise.org](http://oldenterprise.org)

**HARDEE COUNTY FAIR** – Attracting families and participants from all over the rural heartland of Florida, this fair features old fashioned livestock shows, pageants, arts and crafts competitions and rides. Check out the energetic livestock auction and Mexican rodeo.

Where: Hardee County Fairgrounds, Wauchula

Web: [hardeecountyfair.org](http://hardeecountyfair.org)

**SEAFOOD AND MUSIC FESTIVAL** – Seafood “experts” serve up a delicious spread of crab legs, shrimp, tuna, oysters, crawfish, calamari, lobster mac and cheese, fish and chips, smoked mullet spread and more. There’s also top notch live music.

Where: Port Canaveral

Web: [visitportcanaveral.com](http://visitportcanaveral.com)

**DAYTONA 500** – Regarded as one of NASCAR’s most prestigious races, this event draws families and adrenaline junkies from all over the world. The popular Sprint FANZONE an exclusive peek into NASCAR garages, driver appearances and autograph sessions, entertainment, kids’ bounce houses and historic car displays.

Where: Daytona

Web: [daytonaInternationalspeedway.com](http://daytonaInternationalspeedway.com)

## **MARCH EVENTS**

**RANCH JAM** – Bring your whole camper or simply some folding chairs and a picnic blanket for this three-day festival of country, rock and blues bands. Plenty of beer and food vendors will be on hand to serve the masses, as well as bounce houses and face painters for the kids.

Where: Myakka City

Web: [ranchjam.net](http://ranchjam.net)

**SPRING OBSESSION** – Get garden-inspired by the array of Florida native plants, orchids, roses, herbs, gingers, fruits, exotics and other interesting greenery while dropping in on presentations, listening to live music and shopping for unique outdoor artwork and patio furniture.

Where: Munn Park, Lakeland

Web: [springobsession.org](http://springobsession.org)

**SUNLIT FESTIVAL** – This nine-day festival devoted to entirely to literary culture is spread among several events at various venues – a Jack Kerouac night at one of the beat writer’s favorite dive bars, a huge antique book fair, an evening with local poets, a pub-and-coffee-shop crawl devoted to different eras of writing, and more.

Where: St. Petersburg

Web: [sunlitfestival.org](http://sunlitfestival.org)

**UPTOWN ART EXPO** – More than 150 of the country’s best painters, sculptors, photographers, glassworkers, potters, and crafters bring their best stuff to this juried art show, mingling with some new guests this year – chalk artists. Kids will love the street performances, sweet treats and lemonade stands.

Where: Cranes Roost Park, Altamonte Springs

Web: [uptownartexpo.com](http://uptownartexpo.com)

**WEEKI WACHI SWAMP FEST**– Experience Florida swamp culture through fried alligator, black-eyed peas, folk dancers and singers and a “swamp monster contest” – kids and adults dressed in elaborate costumes depicting moss-covered, slime-drenched creatures of the swamp.

Where: Weeki Wachi Springs State Park

Web: [swampfestweekiwachee.com](http://swampfestweekiwachee.com)

**FIRESTONE GRAND PRIX OF ST. PETERSBURG** – This thrilling open-wheel series race twists and turns along a waterfront backdrop, nestled right in downtown St. Petersburg. Even those who don’t have track-side tickets can enjoy the surrounding events such as a beer garden, driver autograph sessions, games, music and refreshments.

Where: St. Petersburg

Web: [gpstpete.com](http://gpstpete.com)

**SPRING FAIR** – Port Orange welcomes the warming weather with carnival rides, ponies, a BMX stunt show, a skate competition, bands, laser tag and a pet costume contest and parade. Arrive early and hit the business and craft expo booths or stay late and watch a movie under the stars.

Where: Port Orange

Web: [familydays.com/spring-fair](http://familydays.com/spring-fair)

**THE WORLD’S LARGEST FOOD TRUCK FESTIVAL EVER** – “World’s largest” is a heady claim but the Guinness record books don’t lie. Tampa continues its tradition of drawing hundreds of food trucks to one location for a weekend, giving guests tasty options from Philly cheesesteaks to fried ice cream.

Where: Tampa

**ST. PETE BEACH BEER FEST** – Use your own commemorative tasting cup to sample more than 50 types of beer from all over Florida and other parts of the country while enjoying the beautiful beach setting. Keep your belly full with tacos, BBQ and other festival foods, and finish it all off with a cigar, hand-rolled right in front of you.

Where: St. Pete Beach

Web: [visitstpeteclearwater.com/beer-fest](http://visitstpeteclearwater.com/beer-fest)



**BIKE WEEK** – A Daytona Beach tradition for nearly 80 years, it's the world's most famous 10-day party for motorcycle enthusiasts and spring breakers, attracting bikers of all shapes, sizes, nationalities and eccentricities. Roam the streets and find vintage cycle shows, rock music concerts, biker breakfasts and planned rides.

Where: Daytona Beach

Web: [officialbikeweek.com](http://officialbikeweek.com)

**GASPARILLA MUSIC FESTIVAL** – An all-star alternative and indie lineup is sure to bring tens of thousands of young and hip concertgoers to blend with fans of other genres like blues, gospel, bluegrass, country and folk.

Where: Downtown Tampa

Web: [gasparillamusicfestival.com](http://gasparillamusicfestival.com)

**WILL MCLEAN MUSIC FESTIVAL** – This homage to the “Florida Father of Folk” brings families, campers, musicians and local historians to Hernando County, where they enjoy banjo and fiddle workshops, music by original songwriters, poetry, storytelling, Florida Cracker-style food, contests and crafts.

Where: Sertoma Youth Ranch, Brooksville

Web: [willmclean.com](http://willmclean.com)

**NATIONAL CUBAN SANDWICH FESTIVAL** – Miami and Tampa have been battling over who has the best and most authentic Cuban sandwich for decades. This festival aims to settle the debate – at least until the next year – with its annual three-day competition spotlighting sandwich makers from both regions, working their magic with pork, Swiss cheese and whatever other secret ingredients the competitors slip between slices of fresh-baked Cuban bread.

Where: Historic Ybor City, Tampa

Web: [thecubansandwichfestival.com](http://thecubansandwichfestival.com)

**LAKERIDGE WINERY AND VINEYARDS WINE AND SEAFOOD FEST** – As a perfect way to kick off Florida's beautiful spring weather, Lakeridge Winery hosts its signature event featuring its own cuvee blanc, chardonnay, ports and other types of wine, as well as beer, soft drinks and a variety of seafood specialties. Complimentary tastings and tours are included.

Where: Clermont

Web: [lakeridgewinery.com](http://lakeridgewinery.com)

**THE PREGO EXPO** – Expectant parents, new parents and future parents (and grandparents) finally get their own expo event with educational seminars, safety tips, new product samples and more. New moms can visit a play area with their little ones and moms-to-be can get free 3D and 4D sonograms of their growing bumps.

Where: Orlando

Web: [thepregoexpo.com](http://thepregoexpo.com)

**FLORIDA STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL** – The Strawberry Capital of the World goes all out to honor its most prized fruit, serving it on shortcake, in milkshakes, by the container or by

the flat. Plus, check out carnival rides, livestock shows, the fried candy bar truck and performances by nationally known headline artists.

Where: Plant City

Web: [flstrawberryfestival.com](http://flstrawberryfestival.com)

**EPCOT INTERNATIONAL FLOWER & GARDEN FESTIVAL** – For its special annual spring event, Epcot transforms into a maze of stunning flower and plant topiaries, outdoor kitchens with International food samples, home design presentations, a hippie-themed concert series and more. March through mid-May.

Where: Lake Buena Vista

Web: [disneyworld.international-flower-and-garden-festival](http://disneyworld.international-flower-and-garden-festival)

## **APRIL EVENTS**

**The Tampa Bay Blues Festival**

Every year since 1995, Vinoy Park, snuggled against the shores of Tampa Bay, has hosted some of the biggest names in Blues, including Buddy Guy, George Thorogood, and Jerry Lee Lewis. Touted as one of the world's finest blues music events, this festival boasts three days of music, a kick-off party and after parties, as well as food, beer, wine, mixed drinks, vendors, and arts and crafts.

Where: St. Petersburg

Web: [tampabaybluesfest.com](http://tampabaybluesfest.com)

**FUNK FEST** – Combining old school and new school rhythm and blues, the long-running Funk Fest brings its tour through Orlando. Top national acts always appear at this all-evening outdoor show that also has plenty of food and merchandise vendors.

Where: Central Florida Fairgrounds, Orlando

Web: [funkfesttour.com](http://funkfesttour.com)

**FLORIDA STORYTELLING FESTIVAL** – Florida Story Association celebrates all things story in Mt. Dora. Highlights: Evening concerts under the Big Top Tent, workshops, Story Swaps, Story Slams, Fringe Stories and Front Porch Stories at the historic Lakeside Inn. There's even a Story Cruise on Lake Dora. Tellers have been bringing their best stories from all over the world for more than 30 years.

Where: Lakeside Inn in Mt. Dora

Web: [flstory.com/](http://flstory.com/)

**SUN 'N FUN INTERNATIONAL FLY-IN & EXPO** – This weeklong celebration of aviation is packed with activities for the young and old, the cutting edge and nostalgic, the adrenaline junkies and the picnic packers. Watch fighter jets soar and hot air balloons float after visiting entertaining and educational programs and expos.

Where: Lakeland

Web: [www.sun-n-fun.org](http://www.sun-n-fun.org)

**TAMPA BAY BLUES FEST** – One of Florida's most popular blues music events returns for the 20th year, set against the beautiful waterfront backdrop of Vinoy Park. This fest always attracts the America's top blues performers. Refreshments are plentiful, with seafood, barbeque, Cuban cuisine, beer, wine, and mixed drinks on the menu.

Where: Vinoy Park, St. Petersburg  
Web: [tampabaybluesfest.com](http://tampabaybluesfest.com)

**FIESTA IN THE PARK** – Experience the beauty of springtime weather in the most scenic area of downtown Orlando, where patrons can gaze at oil paintings, portraits, metal sculptures, Indian arts and crafts and other wares for sale while enjoying live music and feeding the geese in the Lake Eola. Pets welcome!

Where: Lake Eola, downtown Orlando  
Web: [fiestainthepark.com](http://fiestainthepark.com)

**INDIAN RIVER FESTIVAL** – This colorful and quaint festival is family-focused, with lots of interesting and fun activities for all ages including kite flying, kayaking, arts and crafts tents, food, music, an obstacle course and more.

Where: Sandpoint Park, Titusville  
Web: [nbbd.com/festivals](http://nbbd.com/festivals)

**FLORIDA BLUEBERRY FESTIVAL** – Playing second fiddle to the strawberry, the Florida blueberry is often the state's forgotten treat. But not at this annual festival, which features blueberry desserts, blueberry wines, blueberry vinegars and jams, as well as a beer garden, dog show, car show and a Blueberry Kids Zone.

Where: Brooksville  
Web: [floridablueberryfestival.org](http://floridablueberryfestival.org)

**FESTIVAL OF CHOCOLATE** – This touring celebration spreads cocoa love among the chocoholic attendees with traditional and creative desserts, candies and drinks. Small businesses show off their handmade products, pastry chefs and chocolatiers work their artistry and magic and chocolate advocacy groups (yes, these exist) educate guests on all that is wonderful about chocolate.

Where: Tampa  
Web: [festivalofchocolate.com](http://festivalofchocolate.com)

**PIER 60 SUGAR SAND FESTIVAL** – This beach-wide celebration pays tribute to Tampa Bay's two most valuable assets: sugar sands and sunsets. The showcase is a 21,000-square-foot structure that transforms into an art gallery of sand sculptures created by master sculptors from around the world.

Where: Pier 60, Clearwater Beach  
Web: [sugarsandfestival.com](http://sugarsandfestival.com)

**BOOMTOWN DAYS** – The small town of Dunnellon pays homage to its roots -- the discovery here of phosphate in the 1800s. Don't miss the Lil' Miss and Mr. Dunellon Pageant, which is the highlight event among other entertainment, crafts vendors and delicious BBQ and fair food tents.

Where: Historic Dunnellon  
Web: [ocalamarion.com](http://ocalamarion.com)

**EASTER SURF FESTIVAL** – This unusual combination of Easter and surfboards has something for everyone, particularly if you love Florida's east coast waves. Along with

various levels of surfing and skim board competitions, there's an Easter egg hunt and a special sunrise service on the beach.

Where: Lori Wilson Park, Cocoa Beach

Web: [eastersurffest.com](http://eastersurffest.com)

**LEESBURG BIKEFEST** – Unleash your wild side at this loud and raucous three-day event devoted to motorcycles, music and gentle mayhem. Also included: Live music, a tattoo expo, a classic bike show, bikini contests and more.

Where: Leesburg

Web: [leesburgbikefest.com](http://leesburgbikefest.com)

**SIESTA FIESTA** – Siesta Key Village blocks off its streets for a weekend to create the perfect springtime art show only blocks from the Gulf of Mexico and its delightful breeze. Admire or buy paintings, glass art, metalwork, jewelry, sculptures and photography, or check out the live bands and nearby shops.

Where: Siesta Village, Siesta Key

Web: [escape-to-sarasota.com](http://escape-to-sarasota.com)

**FESTA ITALIANA** – It kicks off with a wine party featuring more than 70 wines, as well as Italian antipasti, cuisine and desserts. It ends with the main event, during which dozens of the Tampa Bay area's top restaurants and catering companies serve delicious dishes and tastings.

Where: Historic Ybor City, Tampa

Web: [festaitalianatampa.com](http://festaitalianatampa.com)

**CENTRAL FLORIDA EARTH DAY**– Learn about Florida's endangered species, sample some vegan foods, do some Tahitian dance moves, buy some plants and paint a "paper bag mushroom" at Central Florida's longest-running Earth Day celebration.

Where: Lake Eola Park, Orlando

Web: [cfearthday.org](http://cfearthday.org)

## **MAY EVENTS**

**CLEARWATER BEACH RESTAURANT WEEK** – It's actually two weeks long and gives you the chance to sample some of the area's top-notch dining or casual fare, all it super low prices. It all begins with a kick-off party that features beer and wine tastings, music and fireworks.

Where: Various restaurants in Clearwater Beach

Web: [clearwaterbeachrestaurantweek.com](http://clearwaterbeachrestaurantweek.com)

**FOOD AND WINE ON PINE** – Top chefs and culinary students from around the region prepare their best dishes, from lobster and shrimp ceviche to gourmet tater tots to frozen wine slushies, as guests watch chalk demonstrations and sip Kentucky Derby drink specials along Anna Maria's Pine Avenue.

Where: Along Pine Avenue in Anna Maria

**FISHSTOCK** – Thousands of fishing enthusiasts flock to the fish-filled waters of New Smyrna to show off their skills in various events, including the Redfish-Trout Challenge



and the Striker Offshore Tournament. Children can learn to fish in the Kidstock seminars, and there's a boat show and a 5k for those on the sidelines.

Where: New Smyrna Beach

Web: [fishstock.com](http://fishstock.com)

**BIG GUAVA MUSIC FESTIVAL** – Some of the most popular names in alternative, rock, indie and hip-hop are always on hand to make this one of Florida's best music festivals of the year.

Where: Florida State Fairgrounds, Tampa

Web: [bigguavafest.com](http://bigguavafest.com)

**SCOTT'S ZELLWOOD SWEET CORN JAMBOREE** – Long & Scott Farms is a one-of-a-kind, authentic farm and market, complete with a seven-acre maze and country store. Spend a day listening to music, taking your kids to the on-site playground, checking out various crafts vendors, and of course, trying the delicious Florida sweet corn.

Where: Mt. Dora

**ORANGE BLOSSOM JAMBOREE** – Dozens of Florida bands, ranging from funk to country to hard rock, jam in this four-day event held on a sprawling campsite. Spend a day or roll up in your RV and spend the whole long weekend listening to original and cover tunes and eating BBQ, vegan dishes and other concessions.

Where: Sertoma Ranch, Brooksville

Web: [orangeblossomjamboree.com](http://orangeblossomjamboree.com)

**NEW SMYRNA BEACH BLUES FESTIVAL** – Relax and get into the summer spirit at this annual and much-anticipated blues fest, which draws music fans from all over Florida to the streets of New Smyrna, where talented musicians entertain at various bars and stages throughout the town.

Where: New Smyrna Beach

Web: [nsbfla.com/bluesfest](http://nsbfla.com/bluesfest)

**ORLANDO INTERNATIONAL FRINGE THEATER FESTIVAL** – This 14-day arts festival offers theatre, music, dance performances and artists of all genres. Kids Fringe for children and families features entertaining performances by Fringe artists, workshops, hands-on art activities.

Where: Orlando

Web: [orlandofringe.org](http://orlandofringe.org)

**SUNSCREEN FILM FESTIVAL** – About 90 full-length films and shorts, including narratives, documentaries, foreign films, Spanish-language films, and animated works are featured. Attend workshops to help hone your own filmmaking skills.

Where: St. Petersburg

Web: [sunscreenfilmfestival.com](http://sunscreenfilmfestival.com)

**ST. JOHNS RIVER FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS** – More than 125 regionally and nationally accredited fine artists and craftsmen line the charming brick streets of downtown Sanford, bringing paintings, pottery, sculpture, woodworking, photography, jewelry, blown glass

and more. Enjoy hand crafted food at the Culinary Arts Court and see live artist demonstrations.

Where: Historic Downtown Sanford

Web: [stjohnsriverartfest.com](http://stjohnsriverartfest.com)

**CENTRAL FLORIDA'S BBQ BLOWOUT** – One of the state's biggest BBQ events of the year, the Blowout brings 80 professional and backyard teams grilling and smoking their hearts out to compete for cash, trophies and a chance to go on to the World Food Championships in Vegas.

Where: Oveido

Web: [bbqblowout.org](http://bbqblowout.org)

**TROPICAL HEATWAVE** – Eclectic local bands share stages with national acts in this long-running Tampa Bay area music event hosted by community radio.

Where: Ybor City, Tampa

Web: [tropicalheatwave.org](http://tropicalheatwave.org)

**FOOD AND WINE ON PINE** – Try delicious dishes from local restaurants, pair them with fine wines and craft beer, and dance along to the live rock, blues and jazz bands.

Where: Pine Avenue, Anna Maria

Web: [foodandwindonpine.com](http://foodandwindonpine.com)

**COUNTRY 500** – Top country music acts rock Daytona on Memorial Day weekend as racing's greatest venue turns into a festival-goer's dream for three days and nights. Check out the artist meet-and-greets located throughout pit road and the garages.

Where: Daytona International Speedway, Daytona Beach

Web: [country500.com](http://country500.com)

## **JUNE EVENTS**

### **ST. PETE PRIDE**

This humongous festival draws around 100,000 marchers to the parade in downtown St. Petersburg's Historic Grand Central District, as well as hundreds of thousands of visitors enjoying the area's clubs and beaches. As an added bonus this year, the parade has been moved to nighttime rather than its usual mid-day launch, giving attendees a relief from the heat and giving visitors more time to relax at BBQs, tailgates and parties during the day.

Where: St Petersburg

### **TAMPA BAY CARIBBEAN CARNIVAL**

Steeped in tradition, this colorful event showcases the vibrant Caribbean-American cultures. It includes a J'ouvert morning experience (J'ouvert means day break or morning, and marks the start of the Carnival) as well as exhibits, crafts, top-name entertainment, vendors, a street parade, a Steelpan Jamboree, carnival music, and high-stepping masquerade bands.

Where: St Petersburg

Web: [carnivaltampa.com](http://carnivaltampa.com)

**ST. ARMANDS CIRCLE AND DOWNTOWN VENICE CRAFT FESTIVALS:** Peruse booths filled with painting, crafts, stained glass, pottery, jewelry, photography, personalized products for kids and pooches and much more, including a Green Market for plants, handmade soaps, tangy BBQ sauces and gorgeous orchids.

Where: St. Armands Circle on St. Armands Key just off the coast of Sarasota; Miami Avenue in Venice

Web: [artfestival.com](http://artfestival.com)

**SUMMERLAND CONCERT TOUR:** If the 1990s was your decade, this one's for you. This annual event features the best acts that were popular in that decade.

Where: Top Rocker Field, Fort Myers

Web: [SixBends.com](http://SixBends.com)

**SARASOTA SUP CHAMPIONSHIPS** – Paddleboard enthusiasts, competitors and newbies hit one of the world's best beaches to watch various elite, juniors, sprint and distance events on the water. Demos for kids and adults help even the paddle-weary learn to enjoy this accessible and popular sport.

Where: Siesta Key Beach

Web: [sarasotasupchampionships.com/](http://sarasotasupchampionships.com/)

**SARASOTA MUSIC FESTIVAL** – Hundreds of music students from some of the top programs in the world attend this three-week festival to showcase their talent and learn new skills. Festival audiences are invited to any of the concerts or lectures, including the Thursday afternoon Artist Showcase concerts, Friday Festival chamber concerts, and Saturday Symphony orchestra concerts.

Where: Sarasota

Web: [sarasotaorchestra.org/festival](http://sarasotaorchestra.org/festival)

**MAIN STREET BLAST** – For those who can't wait until July 4 to get the party started, New Port Richey's KIAFEST Main Street Blast early Independence Day celebration includes all the holiday highlights: fair food, a Miss Firecracker contest, live music and, of course, fireworks.

Where: Downtown New Port Richey

Web: [nprmainstreet.com](http://nprmainstreet.com)

**TAMPA BAY CARIBBEAN CARNIVAL**– Festive music, loud colors and fiery foods take over St. Petersburg's Albert Whitted Park while a colorful street parade honors the Caribbean culture. Great live music, too.

Where: St. Petersburg

Web: [carnivaltampa.com](http://carnivaltampa.com)

**ONE MAGICAL WEEKEND** – One of the world's biggest LGBT weekend events returns to the Walt Disney World resorts, bringing an exciting lineup of pool parties, film viewings, Epcot drink-around-the-world shenanigans and other fun times.

Where: Lake Buena Vista

Web: [onemagicalweekend.com](http://onemagicalweekend.com)

**ST. PETE PRIDE** – One of the southeast United States' largest LGBT pride celebrations features artists, musicians, fashion designers, community leaders, business owners and

activists. The grand finale is the evening night parade and family- and pet-friendly street festival on the last weekend of Pride.

Where: St. Petersburg

Web: [stpetepride.com](http://stpetepride.com)

**SILVER SPURS RODEO** – More than 70 years old, this classic Central Florida rodeo is still going strong, drawing the best bull riders, barrel racers and ropers to the Silver Spurs Arena. The event kicks off with the glitzy Miss Silver Spurs pageant and has various kids' activities and interesting vendors to visit during rodeo breaks.

Where: Osceola Heritage Park, Kissimmee

Web: [silverspursrodeo.com](http://silverspursrodeo.com)

**POLKA DOT FLEA** – As cute as it sounds, the annual Polka Dot Flea is filled with cool vintage items and wares, more like a Paris street market than a junkyard of overstock items. Treasure hunters delight in one-of-a-kind finds for their home and garden, as well as unique items of clothing, funky antique jewelry, repurposed bikes, furniture and more.

Where: Central Florida Fairgrounds, Orlando

Web: [polkadotflea.com](http://polkadotflea.com)

**REPTICON** – This long-running annual features tub-loads of slithery, cold-blooded creatures for petting, handling, photographing, purchasing or watching in one of the many educational lecture events devoted to snakes, geckos, iguanas, toads, turtles and more.

Where: Florida State Fairgrounds, Tampa

Web: [repticon.com](http://repticon.com)

**THE BEER PROJECT** – St. Petersburg's Museum of Fine Arts teams up with the homegrown Green Bench Brewing to present this well-meshed combo of arts and craft beer. Cast your vote in a homebrewed beer competition and taste local breweries' special beers inspired by selected works in the Museum's collection.

Where: St. Petersburg

Web: [fine-arts.org/beer-project](http://fine-arts.org/beer-project)

## **JULY EVENTS**

**SARASOTA IMPROV FESTIVAL** – Comedy troupes from all over the country – and some from overseas – bring three days of laughs and performances, including all-female acts, musicals, audience interactive plays and other entertaining displays of off-the-cuff talent. Participants can also buy tickets to workshops and seminars.

Where: Florida Studio Theatre, Sarasota

Web: [floridastudiotheatre.org](http://floridastudiotheatre.org)

**THUNDER ON THE RIDGE** – This annual event sets Polk County a-glow with the area's largest July 4th fireworks display, including a Guinness World Record number of sparklers lit at once. General admission is free and includes live music, children's activities, games, arts & crafts vendors, a beer garden and food concessions.

Where: Haines City

Web: [visitcentralflorida.org](http://visitcentralflorida.org)



**SHARKCON** – Shark! Ease your fears of these saw-toothed beasts by learning more about their fascinating history, psychology, physiology, habits and pop culture significance at the returning SharkCon, a weekend of education and interactive fun honoring the ocean. See displays featuring touch tanks, paddleboard lessons and even mermaids.

Where: Florida State Fairgrounds, Tampa

Web: [shark-con.com](http://shark-con.com)

**FIREWORKS AT THE FOUNTAIN** – The Orlando Concert Band entertains the July 4th crowd with patriotic favorites while families enjoy a kids' activity area with basketball, tennis and more. Grab some BBQ and drinks before settling near the lake to watch a dazzling nighttime fireworks display.

Where: Lake Eola Park, Orlando

Web: [cityoforlando.net/fireworks](http://cityoforlando.net/fireworks)

**COOL ART SHOW** – This popular, free indoor (read: air-conditioned!) art show fills the St. Petersburg Coliseum with ceramics, jewelry, photography, paintings, sculpture and multimedia works. Food and drinks, including beer and wine, are also on the menu.

Where: St. Petersburg

Web: [pava-artists.org](http://pava-artists.org)

**MAJOR BEACH SOCCER** – More than 100 teams and thousands of spectators flood the white sands of Clearwater Beach to take part in this serious beach soccer competition series. It's a fun break from the usual beach sports of volleyball and Frisbee and one of five qualifying tournaments leading up to the December national championships.

Where: Clearwater Beach

Web: [majorbeachsoccer.com/clearwater-beach](http://majorbeachsoccer.com/clearwater-beach)

**A SCI-FI FOURTH OF JULY** – Dress up as your favorite sci-fi movie character and hit the streets of Celebration for this quirky, upbeat Independence Day party. Live music provided by colorful bands, artists and artists will lead up to a spectacular fireworks display set to a sci-fi soundtrack.

Where: Downtown Celebration

Web: [celebrationtowncenter.com](http://celebrationtowncenter.com)

**TASTE OF THE BEACHES** – Sample seafood, desserts, hot sauces, jams, ice cream, ethnic cuisine and more from local favorite restaurants and caterers serving the beach foodie scene. Buy a \$25 drink wristband and taste unlimited beer and wine, too.

Where: Madeira Beach

**VANS WARPED TOUR** – Music fans from all over the state flood the waterfront Vinoy Park to see some of the world's most popular alternative rock bands. Cool off at the misting station and slip n' slide if you don't mind getting wet.

Where: Vinoy Park, St. Petersburg

Web: [vanswarpedtour.com](http://vanswarpedtour.com)

**DUNEDIN ORANGE FESTIVAL** – In a town known for its history of oranges, orange groves and citrus packing, this festival became a natural fit in 2010 and has been held every July

in Edgewater Park since. Sample some contest entries in the local restaurant Mojo cook-Off Contest, or try some fruity ice cream, smoothies and juice blends.

Where: Dunedin

## **AUGUST EVENTS**

### **GAY DAYS**

What began in 1991 as an unofficial weekend where LGBT visitors show up at Disney World and wear red has blossomed into one of the world's most popular and well-known weekends for gay and lesbian tourist. "We were voted the number one global destination in 2013, which we're excited about," said Chris Alexander-Manley, President of Gay Days, Inc. "It helps that we're in one of the top tourist destinations in the world." The weekend's appeal spans all ages and applies to all of Orlando's theme parks.

Where: Orlando

**SARASOTA SLAM** – Fishing amateurs beware! This is a fiercely competitive tournament for skilled inshore and offshore anglers yielding impressive results snapper, trout and other tough catches to weigh in and compete for money prizes. There's a category for Jr. Anglers and a dockside BBQ and party for competitors and guests.

Where: Marina Jack, Sarasota

Web: [sarasotaslam.com](http://sarasotaslam.com)

**NIGHT IN THE TROPICS** – Feel like you're in Key West without driving hours south by hitting the heart of downtown New Port Richey and partying with the parrot-heads. The all-night-long street party includes Latin-style food and music, tropical and exotic birds, dancing, street performers, a classic car cruise-in and a tropical beer garden.

Where: Historic downtown New Port Richey

**HARVEST GRAPE STOMP** – Fun for kids and even more fun for adults over 21, Lakeridge Winery's annual grape stomp is a great late-summer event that invites families to feel the squish of grape skins between their toes while being serenaded by local musicians and tasting a variety of wine and beer. Soft drinks are also on-hand for the kiddos, as well as food for purchase.

Where: Lakeridge Winery & Vineyards, Clermont

Web: [lakeridgewinery.com](http://lakeridgewinery.com)

**SUMMER OF RUM FEST** – What better way to stay cool in the Florida summer heat than with a sampling of various rum punches, rum runners, rum coladas, rum mojitos and more rum. Patrons have the option of partying outdoors for a true tropical experience or cooling off indoors, with music and dancing throughout.

Where: The Cuban Club, Ybor City (Tampa)

Web: [summerofrumfest.com](http://summerofrumfest.com)

**ORLANDO GIFT SHOW** – Get your holiday shopping done early at this popular expo and trade show where home-shopping fanatics, collectors and other curious buyers can sift through a wide selection of vendors selling decorative accessories, aromatherapy, greeting cards, paper goods, tabletop, resort and tourist merchandise, logo products, fashion

accessories, toys, games, gourmet products, jewelry and even gift cards for those who can't decide.

Where: Orange County Convention Center, Orlando

Web: [orlandogiftshow.com](http://orlandogiftshow.com)

**INDIAFEST OF MANASOTA** – The Gujarati Association of Manasota and the Indian American Association team up to raise awareness and appreciation of the culture, traditional dance, food, handmade merchandise and historical presentations highlighting Indian life and the spirit of India.

Where: Bradenton Area Convention Center, Palmetto

Web: [manasotaindiafest.com](http://manasotaindiafest.com)

**FLORIDA KIDS & FAMILY EXPO** – All types of family-focused exhibitors – from playground-makers to Girl Scouts to petting farms – gather to display their goods and provide interactive fun for kids of all ages and their parents. Teens can learn makeup techniques, kids can play laser tag and parents can learn more about party planning, daycare and other innovative offerings. Bonus: It's all indoors and air-conditioned.

Where: Orange County Convention Center, Orlando

Web: [mycentralfloridafamily.com](http://mycentralfloridafamily.com)

**GULFPORT GECKO CRAWL** – The little town of Gulfport signifies the end of summer and kicks off its signature GeckoFest with its annual Gecko Crawl, a six-bar pub crawl and street festival that ends at the local favorite, O'Maddy's.

Where: Historic Waterfront District, Gulfport

Web: [geckofest.com](http://geckofest.com)

**TAMPA BAY COMIC CON** – Geek out at one of the Tampa Bay area's most well-known and long-running "cons," filled with everything you'd expect at weekend devoted to comic book junkies: cosplay, celebrity guests, toys and graphic novels, an electronic gaming arena and a "game cave" with tabletop and board games, foam sword fighting, a kids play zone and more.

Where: Tampa Convention Center, Downtown Tampa

Web: [tampabaycomiccon.com](http://tampabaycomiccon.com)

**WAZOO** – Named one of the "10 Great Beer Festivals in the Country" by USA Today, this annual tasting event features 275 beers and beverages from around the world, tasty food samplings from favorite Tampa Bay area restaurants and live music throughout the Zoo.

Where: ZooTampa at Lowry Park

## **SEPTEMBER EVENTS**

### **COME OUT WITH PRIDE**

An entertaining and exciting event for both LGBT and non-LGBT visitors alike, Come Out With Pride – also known as Orlando Pride – takes over downtown and other areas for a week. With big-name sponsors such as Macy's and Universal Studios, the parade and its colorful costumes and elaborate floats is something to behold, and the fireworks show is one of the best you'll see outside of July 4th.

Where: Orlando

#### TOM JOYNER FAMILY REUNION

This Expo is huge, free, and family-friendly – what’s not to like? Its concerts, games, star-studded performances, seminars, fitness, celebrity appearances and autograph signings are sure to keep your whole gang smiling.

Where: Orlando

Web: [blackamericaweb.com/category/tom-joyner-family-reunion](http://blackamericaweb.com/category/tom-joyner-family-reunion)

SHINE MURAL FESTIVAL – More than a dozen local and national mural artists put their work on display on downtown building walls and inside galleries throughout St. Petersburg’s funky, growing arts district. Watch art students take part in a community mural project outside of a bar along Central Avenue or take one of the trolley or walking tours.

Where: Downtown St. Petersburg

Web: [shineonstpete.com](http://shineonstpete.com)

TAMPA THEATRE WINEFEST – At a beloved and historic old theater holds its biggest fundraiser, patrons are encouraged to come dressed as their favorite character based on the yearly theme. Also: sample fare from some of the area’s best independent restaurants and rare, top-rated wines from around the world.

Where: Tampa Theatre, downtown Tampa

Web: [tampatheatre.org/WineFest](http://tampatheatre.org/WineFest)

HOWL-O-SCREAM FREAKY PREVIEW – Dare to be among the first guests – or victims – at Busch Gardens’ annual haunted freak show opening weekend. Expect lots of terrifying surprises and pop-ups as you encounter roaming creatures, scare zones and interactive entertainment, as well as navigating some of Florida’s top thrill rides in the dark.

Where: Busch Gardens, Tampa

Web: [seaworldparks.com](http://seaworldparks.com)

PIONEER DAYS – The long-running, two-week celebration wraps up with the Annual Pioneer Days Parade on Labor Day morning. But before that, enjoy a weekend packed with family-friendly activities such as cardboard boat races, a photo contest, a car show, a fish-a-thon, a chalk art festival, “Englewood’s Got Talent” and more.

Where: Englewood

Web: [englewoodpioneerdays.com](http://englewoodpioneerdays.com)

FESTIVAL OF FLIGHT – Take a ride on a helicopter, float through the air on a hot-air balloon, co-pilot a plane or just sit back and watch the beauty of colorful flying objects, including deltas, trikes and kites. This festival brings together the pilot and aviation community with Florida families.

Where: Wesley Chapel

Web: [festivalofflightwesleychapel.com](http://festivalofflightwesleychapel.com)

TASTE OF THE FIELDS – Just as the early fall temperatures begin to drop, enjoy an evening of “country elegant” outdoor dining with a multi-course plated meal, served family-style, made from food grown on Hernando County soil. Then relax and enjoy live music, wine tasting, a corn maze and other fun grown-up activities.

Where: Lakeside Ranch, Brooksville  
Web: [kiwanisofthebrooksvilleridge.com](http://kiwanisofthebrooksvilleridge.com)

GECKOFEST – A month of gecko-themed fundraiser events finishes with the well-attended, daylong Geckofest, which takes over the waterfront streets of quirky Gulfport with residents and visitors dressed up as the reptiles. The day consists of a walking parade, a costume contest, street performers, food vendors, two musical stages and arts and crafts tents.

Where: Downtown Gulfport  
Web: [geckofest.com](http://geckofest.com)

ART IN ODD PLACES ORLANDO – This inaugural event is exactly what it sounds like: the discovery of unusual and fun works of art in places you would never expect to find them. Check out performances and installation pieces from more than 60 artists along the entire stretch of Orlando's 14th Street, from FDR Drive to the High Line.

Where: Downtown Orlando  
Web: [artinoddplaces.org/orlando](http://artinoddplaces.org/orlando)

FLAVOR RUN 5K – Engage all the senses while getting a good workout at this unusual and hilarious 5K run/walk/stroll event, similar to a "color run" except tastier. Entrants make their way toward the finish line while being doused with brightly colored powder that tastes like blueberry, strawberry, orange, banana, watermelon and grape.

Where: Florida State Fairgrounds, Tampa  
Web: [flavorrun.com/tampa](http://flavorrun.com/tampa)

ST. PETE OKTOBERFEST – Celebrate Oktoberfest St. Pete-style with an afternoon and evening of costume, yodeling and stein-holding contests, knockwurst and homemade kraut, specially brewed beers, kid-friendly activities and a lineup of some of the area's favorite bands and solo artists.

Where: Grand Central District, St. Petersburg  
Web: [stpeteoktoberfest.com](http://stpeteoktoberfest.com)

ROCK THE UNIVERSE – Florida's largest Christian music festival returns to Universal Studios, where some of the country's best Christian rock and worship music bands and inspirational speakers entertain a large turnout of enthusiastic fans. Guests can also join in a moving Candle Lighting Ceremony and a special Sunday Morning Worship Service.

Where: Universal Studios, Orlando  
Web: [universalorlando.com/Rock-The-Universe](http://universalorlando.com/Rock-The-Universe)

I LIKE IT HOT! FESTIVAL – If you like it hot – we're talking mouth-burning, tear-jerking, forehead-sweating spicy – you'll likely meet your match at this annual event. The toughest of palates, as well as those who like it considerably milder, can try hundreds of gourmet and novelty foods, including beef jerky, sauces, salsas, jellies, rubs, lollipops and straight-up raw hot peppers.

Where: Minnreg Hall, Largo  
Web: [ilikeithotfestival.com](http://ilikeithotfestival.com)



**AFT, CRAFT & WINE FESTIVAL** – More than 150 artists and craftsmen sell original artwork and gifts in beautiful Cranes Roost Park. Guests can also stop by the various wine tents and taste a wide variety of reds, whites, champagnes and roses as a part of the event's Wine Stroll.

Where: Crane Roost Park, Altamonte Springs

Web: [aacwf.com](http://aacwf.com)

**FOOD TRUCK WARS** – Come very hungry and pace yourself at Winter Haven's Food Truck Wars, where patrons can vote for their favorite dishes among 40 trucks. The offerings include gelato, doughnuts, kabobs, pizza, lobster rolls, tacos, chowders, hummus and more.

Where: Central Park in downtown Winter Haven

Web: [foodtruckwars.com](http://foodtruckwars.com)

## **OCTOBER EVENTS**

### **TAMPA GAY AND LESBIAN FILM FEST**

The Tampa Bay Business Guild, the Bay Area Human Rights Coalition, and the Tampa Bay Gay Men's Chorus come together to host this film festival, screened at the historic Tampa Theatre. While a few parties and galas surround the event, it is centered mainly on film and the arts, attracting a more cerebral crowd.

Where: Tampa

**SARASOTA PUMPKIN FESTIVAL** – Orange is the new Sarasota, as the city hosts its all-things pumpkin weekend. Features include: pumpkin patch, pumpkin maze, carnival rides, pie-eating contests, hay rides, 100 live shows, kids' zone, Live Ninja Turtle show, pony rides, petting zoo, circus and a tricky-dog show.

Where: Payne Park, downtown Sarasota

**THE NEON VIBE 5K** – The perfect pre-Halloween race event is eerily lit with glow-in-the-dark beads, glow sticks and bodies splashed with neon colors. While a DJ pumps techno and dance music, runners and walkers will pass through "glow zones" and cool down at the "aftervibe celebration" at the end.

Where: Premier Sports Campus, Lakewood Ranch

Web: [theneonvibe.com/sarasota](http://theneonvibe.com/sarasota)

**15 MINUTES OF FAME FILM FESTIVAL** – This free, no-frills film festival is for those who truly love movies -- especially very short movies. Get the chance to screen a colorful variety of documentaries, music videos, animation, narratives and other creative forms of film, each running no longer than 15 minutes.

Where: International Palms Resort and Conference Center, Orlando

Web: [15minutefilmfest.com](http://15minutefilmfest.com)

**CENTRAL FLORIDA VEG FEST** – This vegetarian festival touts itself as one of the biggest and best in the country, drawing hundreds of food and product vendors and presenters from around the world. Bring your dog, pet a pig, take a yoga class and sample creative and delicious vegetarian and vegan dishes.

Where: Orlando Festival Park, Orlando

Web: [cfvegfest.org](http://cfvegfest.org)

**ZOOBOO KIDS** – For the little trick-or-treaters too young to enjoy gory zombies and haunted mansions, Lowry Park created a new “fright-free” Halloween event for kids ages 3-11. Think adorable costumes, critters, corn mazes and characters that will make for great photo ops and create nice memories rather than nightmares.

Where: Lowry Park Zoo, Tampa

**GREAT AMERICAN COOTER FEST**– Inverness’ most famous – or at least famously named – festival returns with music, dancing, food trucks, boat races and more. Check out the impressive costume contest and sample a treat from a cupcake bake-off, all in the name of a mythical turtle named Cooter.

Where: Liberty Park, Inverness

Web: [www.cooterfestival.com](http://www.cooterfestival.com)

**OKTOBERFEST TAMPA** – Get into the spirit with this Deutsch-themed, three-day party, complete with frothy beer, lederhosen, accordion music and other shenanigans. Vendors will be serving up currywurst, warm pretzels and German baked goods. Guests can participate in the stein hoisting, keg stack, “carry the wench” and other games.

Where: Curtis Hixon Park, downtown Tampa

Web: [oktoberfesttampa.com](http://oktoberfesttampa.com)

**THE FESTIVAL** – Also known as the Shelton Brothers Festival, this roving event will visit St. Petersburg and its thriving craft beer scene, introducing around 90 local, national and International artisanal beer, cider, and mead makers through tastings and workshops.

Web: [sheltonbrothers.com](http://sheltonbrothers.com)

**ART & ALGORITHMS** – Science nerds and visual artists join forces in this free, walkable festival that piques the senses with interactive artwork, an iPad lab, International short film screenings, digital gaming, virtual reality exhibits and other cool and entertaining displays.

Where: Downtown Titusville

Web: [artandalgorithms.com](http://artandalgorithms.com)

**MOUNT DORA BICYCLE FESTIVAL**– Cyclists from all over the world love this three-day weekend of multiple routes along gorgeous Mount Dora, ranging from a friendly ghost ride to crushing hill climbs, as well as pre-ride breakfasts, a beer garden and other activities.

Where: Mount Dora

Web: [moundorabicyclefestival.com](http://moundorabicyclefestival.com)

**LAKELAND ZOMBIE FEST** – Experience the closest thing to a zombie apocalypse you can imagine as tens of thousands of bloody, ashen-faced, hollow-eyed zombie wannabes slither through the streets of Lakeland. Kids can hit the “safe zone” if they’re not fans of walking dead people, and food vendors and dance and costume competitions lighten the mood.

Where: Sun n Fun Convention Campus, Lakeland

Web: [lakelandzombiefest.com](http://lakelandzombiefest.com)

BRICK-OR-TREAT – LEGOLAND has expanded its annual celebration so that more can enjoy the building activities, scavenger hunts, the world's largest LEGO jack-o-lantern and a nightly Halloween-themed fireworks show.

Where: LEGOLAND, Winter Haven

Web: [legoland.com](http://legoland.com)

OCALA ARTS FESTIVAL – Art lovers and collectors fill the streets of historic downtown Ocala for this juried fine arts show with 155 artists and craftsmen from all over the country. Kids can also enjoy activity stations and entertainment and holiday shoppers can get an early start at the crafts and gifts tents.

Where: Downtown Ocala

Web: [fafo.org](http://fafo.org)

CLEARWATER JAZZ HOLIDAY – This International music fest has drawn acts such as Dizzy Gillespie, Tony Bennett and Branford Marsalis.

Where: Coachman Park, Clearwater

Web: [clearwaterjazz.com](http://clearwaterjazz.com)

### **NOVEMBER EVENTS**

SAND ART TRIO – Not one, not two, but count 'em, three this year! You can't go wrong with any of them: the Annual American Sand Sculpting Championship and Beach Festival on Fort Myers Beach, the International Sand Art Competition in Key West and the Annual Siesta Key Crystal Classic International Sand Sculpting Festival on Siesta Key near Sarasota. No matter which one you attend, you will be awed by the amazing out-of-sand creations.

Where: Siesta Key

Web: Respectively, [fmbsandsculpting.com](http://fmbsandsculpting.com), [sandisle.com](http://sandisle.com) and [SiestaKeyCrystalClassic.com](http://SiestaKeyCrystalClassic.com)

SARASOTA CHALK FESTIVAL – Hundreds of artists use the pavement as their canvas and pastel chalk as their medium to create breathtaking oversized traditional 3D illusionistic paintings. You're invited to participate in, attend and interact with the artists as they go about their work. There's a different theme each year.

Where: Downtown Venice and the Venice Airport Fairgrounds

Web: [chalkfestival.org](http://chalkfestival.org)

MEDIEVAL MANIA – It's east coast versus west coast, with Camelot Days Medieval Festival on the former and the Sarasota Medieval Fair on the latter. Either one will take you back to days of yore, with living chess games, jousting competitions, battling knights, jesters, jugglers, birds of prey and lots of good grub and grog.

Where: Respectively, T. Y. Park in Hollywood and Ringling Woods behind the Sarasota Fairgrounds.

Web: Respectively, [camelotdays.com](http://camelotdays.com) and [sarasotamedievalfair.com](http://sarasotamedievalfair.com)

"CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR!" HOLIDAY HOME TOUR - Elaborate, elegant, over-the-top designer Christmas decorations in one of Florida's most historic mansions. The 1886 "Gilded Age" Victorian Stetson Mansion has been recently been listed as one of the "Top 10 Things to do in Florida" by Tripadvisor. Reservations required.

Where: Stetson Mansion, 1031 Camphor Ln, DeLand, FL 32720  
Web: [stetsonmansion.com/](http://stetsonmansion.com/)

**THE FANCY FLEA** – Rather than the usual hodgepodge of items found at traditional markets, this is a different kind of flea market, targeted toward the Southern belles with upscale tastes. The outdoor vintage show offers shabby chic décor, furniture, antiques, garden and patio accessories and artwork.

Where: Strawberry Festival Fairgrounds, Plant City  
Web: [fancyflea.net](http://fancyflea.net)

**VOLUSIA COUNTY FAIR & YOUTH SHOW** – Local kids showcase their livestock and talents in art, photography, music and craft projects while families enjoy fair rides, food, live music and interesting exhibits for all ages.

Where: Volusia County Fair & Expo Center, Deland  
Web: [volusiacountyfair.com](http://volusiacountyfair.com)

**ZOOFARI** – More than 50 local restaurants serve up their best dishes and recipes at this popular zoo fundraiser, where participants enjoy an open bar, live music and dancing.

Where: Lowry Park Zoo, Tampa  
Web: [lowryparkzoo.org/zoofari](http://lowryparkzoo.org/zoofari)

**STONE CRAB JAM** – Shrimp, fish, and, of course, stone crab, are the cornerstone of the feast served at this rotary club festival and fundraiser, which also features vendors selling handmade wood furniture, embroidered clothing and other crafts and gifts.

Where: Crystal River  
Web: [kingsbayrotary.org/stone\\_crab\\_jam](http://kingsbayrotary.org/stone_crab_jam)

**MOUNT DORA PLANT & GARDEN FAIR** – Experienced gardeners love finding obscure and unique plants and flower; beginning gardeners learn heaps of great info at this colorful fall fair. Shop for anything, including water lilies, olive trees, raw honey and hand-painted pots.

Where: Downtown Mount Dora  
Web: [moundoraplantandgardenfair.org](http://moundoraplantandgardenfair.org)

**RIBFEST** – For more than 26 years, people have been flocking to the smoky aroma of this yummy fest, where various “ribbers” from around the U.S. compete for top prize. Plus, hot dogs, funnel cakes, Texas fries and other fun foods. The event also draws big musical names.

Where: Vinoy Park, St. Petersburg  
Web: [ribfest.org](http://ribfest.org)

**WHEN PIGS FLY SOUTH BBQ CHALLENGE** – Billed as the “largest fly-in BBQ in the South,” this fair combines aviation with smoked meats, beer and bands for a fun combination that’s family friendly and free. Stick around for the impressive Warbird fly-in.

Where: SUN ‘n FUN Convention Campus, Lakeland

**HOMOSASSA ARTS, CRAFTS AND SEAFOOD FESTIVAL** – Set in one of Florida’s best fishing towns, this fest draws artists from all over the country, including painters, sculptors,

photographers and jewelers. Sample some Sunshine State specialties such as gator tail and conch fritters.

Where: Historic Old Homosassa

Web: [homosassaseafoodfestival.org](http://homosassaseafoodfestival.org)

**ART CRAWL** – Thrifty art collectors and shoppers looking for holiday gifts will love this juried art show, which features emerging and established artists selling affordable artwork, much of which will be offered for \$500 or less. Those just looking can enjoy the live music and demonstrations.

Where: Polk Museum of Art, Lakeland

Web: [downtownlakelandfl.com/art-crawl](http://downtownlakelandfl.com/art-crawl)

**MIXON FRUIT FARMS HARVEST FESTIVAL** – Mixon Fruit Farms, one of the state's most well-known citrus farms and country stores, holds this fall weekend of circus acts, antique cars, kid-friendly games, bungee jumping, rock wall climbing and food.

Where: Bradenton

Web: [mixon.com/harvestfestival](http://mixon.com/harvestfestival)

**CONGA CALIENTE** – Tampa celebrates Hispanic culture and heritage with live national acts that have included Tito Nieves and Viva Mas in the past. Taste traditional Latin dishes, smoke a Cuba cigar and visit the beer garden or one of the many educational or health displays or the arts and crafts tents.

Where: Al Lopez Park, Tampa

Web: [congacaliente.com](http://congacaliente.com)

## **DECEMBER EVENTS**

### **SANTA SPEEDO RUN TAMPA BAY -**

Joining this light-hearted, Christmas-themed run at Centennial Park is a good excuse to check out Ybor City's holiday decorations, courtesy of the GaYBOR District, which began gaining ground years ago and helped shape the area's business and nightclub scene.

Proceeds from the run benefit Brighter Seasons for Children and AIDS Service Association of Pinellas, which serves the Tampa Bay region.

Where: Tampa-Ybor City

**LET THERE BE LIGHTS!** – Millions and millions of them will light up the South Florida holiday skies and here's where to see some of the best and the brightest: Santa's Enchanted Forest at Tropical Park in Miami; Holiday Nights at the Edison & Ford Winter Estates in Fort Myers; Festival of Lights at Fisherman's Village in Punta Gorda, and Symphony of Lights at the Village of Gulfstream Park in Hallandale.

Web: [santasenchantedforest.com](http://santasenchantedforest.com), [edisonfordwinterestates.org](http://edisonfordwinterestates.org), [fishville.com](http://fishville.com) and [thevillageatgulfstreampark.com](http://thevillageatgulfstreampark.com)

**SNOW FEST SARASOTA** – Daily "snowfall" covers the park in soft, white snow while families play on giant slides, build snowmen and take photos on Santa's lap. The three-day event also offers pony rides, hula hoopers, jugglers, DJs and other holiday entertainment.

Where: Payne Park, downtown Sarasota



ATOMIC HOLIDAY BAZAAR – Continuing its decade-long tradition of bringing weird, wild and uniquely local goods and gifts together in one place, this bazaar market returns with an array of jangly handmade jewelry, unconventionally shaped cookie cutters, cheeky postcards and paper goods, pop art handbags and T-shirts, one-of-a-kind stuffed animals, skull-themed scarves and more.

Where: Municipal Auditorium, Sarasota

Web: [atomicholidaybazaar.com](http://atomicholidaybazaar.com)

"CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR!" HOLIDAY HOME TOUR - Elaborate, elegant, over-the-top designer Christmas decorations in one of Florida's most historic mansions. The 1886 "Gilded Age" Victorian Stetson Mansion has been recently been listed as one of the "Top 10 Things to do in Florida" by Tripadvisor. Reservations required.

Where: Stetson Mansion, 1031 Camphor Ln, DeLand, FL 32720

Web: [stetsonmansion.com/](http://stetsonmansion.com/)

GLITTER GLISTEN AND SNOW – Take part in the novelty of Haines City's annual break from the warm and sunny holiday season by enjoying roasted chestnuts, hot cider and cocoa, Santa Claus appearances and luminary lightings. Bring your earmuffs and mittens to play in the falling snow.

Where: Lake Eva Park, Haines City

Web: [visitcentralflorida.org](http://visitcentralflorida.org)

BUSCH GARDENS CHRISTMAS TOWN – Tampa's safari-themed park transforms into a winter wonderland of Christmas shows, music, a Jingle Bell Express train ride for kids, Santa's workshop and more than a million twinkling lights.

Where: Busch Gardens, Tampa

Web: [seaworldparks.com/christmastown](http://seaworldparks.com/christmastown)

PINELLAS PIONEER SETTLEMENT CHRISTMAS JAMBOREE – Experience old-fashioned Victorian holiday festivities at this historic settlement near Boyd Hill Nature Preserve. Take a tour of the living museum and late 1800s buildings, homes and shops, then enjoy the music, craft shows, hay rides with Santa and shopping.

Where: St. Petersburg

Web: [pinellaspioneersettlement.org](http://pinellaspioneersettlement.org)

CHRISTMAS BRICKTACULAR – Think you're a LEGO builder extraordinaire? Check out this impressive display that includes a 30-foot Christmas tree made of 270,000 tiny plastic bricks, a life-size Santa and reindeer sleigh. Kids can make their own structures in an activity area and can participate in a LEGO scavenger hunt.

Where: LEGOLAND Florida, Winter Haven

Web: [legoland.com/bricktacular](http://legoland.com/bricktacular)

WINE & CHOCOLATE FESTIVAL – Pair robust reds and creamy whites with fine chocolate at this annual Lakeridge Winery tasting. Artists and crafters display their wares, local bands entertain and vendors serve wine, beer, soft drinks and food.

Where: Lakeridge Winery, Clermont

Web: [lakeridgewinery.com](http://lakeridgewinery.com)

**BRADENTON BLUES FESTIVAL** – Local and national blues acts entertain along Bradenton’s waterfront all day, filling the streets with music while thousands of visitors peruse the food trucks, local vendors and nearby bars.

Where: Riverwalk, downtown Bradenton

Web: [bradentonbluesfestival.org](http://bradentonbluesfestival.org)

**97X NEXT BIG THING** – This popular alternative rock concert returns year after year with some of the hottest acts on the scene. Concertgoers can play games, enter contests and visit food and drink tents in between acts.

Where: MIDFLORIDA Credit Union Amphitheatre, Tampa

Web: [97xonline.com](http://97xonline.com)

**WINTERFEST FESTIVAL OF FINE ARTS & CRAFTS** – Beautiful Anna Maria Island hosts a juried arts and crafts show filled with original paintings, glass, jewelry, pottery, sculpture, fiber arts, photography, wood and other works. Patrons can spend all day walking the fest while sampling seafood dishes, BBQ, ice cream and other treats.

Where: City Hall Field, Holmes Beach

Web: [islandartleague.org](http://islandartleague.org)

**MAIN STREET HOLIDAYS** – New Port Richey counts down to Christmas, kicking off the first couple weekends of December with a holiday lights celebration, followed by a river boat parade, a kids’ holiday production and movie, breakfast with Santa and Mrs. Claus and a nighttime street parade.

Where: Downtown New Port Richey

Web: [nprmainstreet.com](http://nprmainstreet.com)

**HOLIDAY HOOPLA** – Gulfport brings back its annual street event of holiday creativity, hosting arts, crafts and boutique vendors selling original gifts, a Christmas costume contest with prizes for best family, adult, kid and pet costumes and a lighted boat parade to end the evening.

Where: Gulfport

Web: [gulfportma.com/holiday-hoopla](http://gulfportma.com/holiday-hoopla)

**SNOW ON 7TH HOLIDAY PARADE** – Ybor City’s famous 7th Avenue turns into a winter wonderland of parading characters, colorful floats, marching bands and a Santa Claus appearance, all under a veil of falling snow. Take photos with a large and festive Christmas tree in the center square and greet Tampa’s mayor and his family.

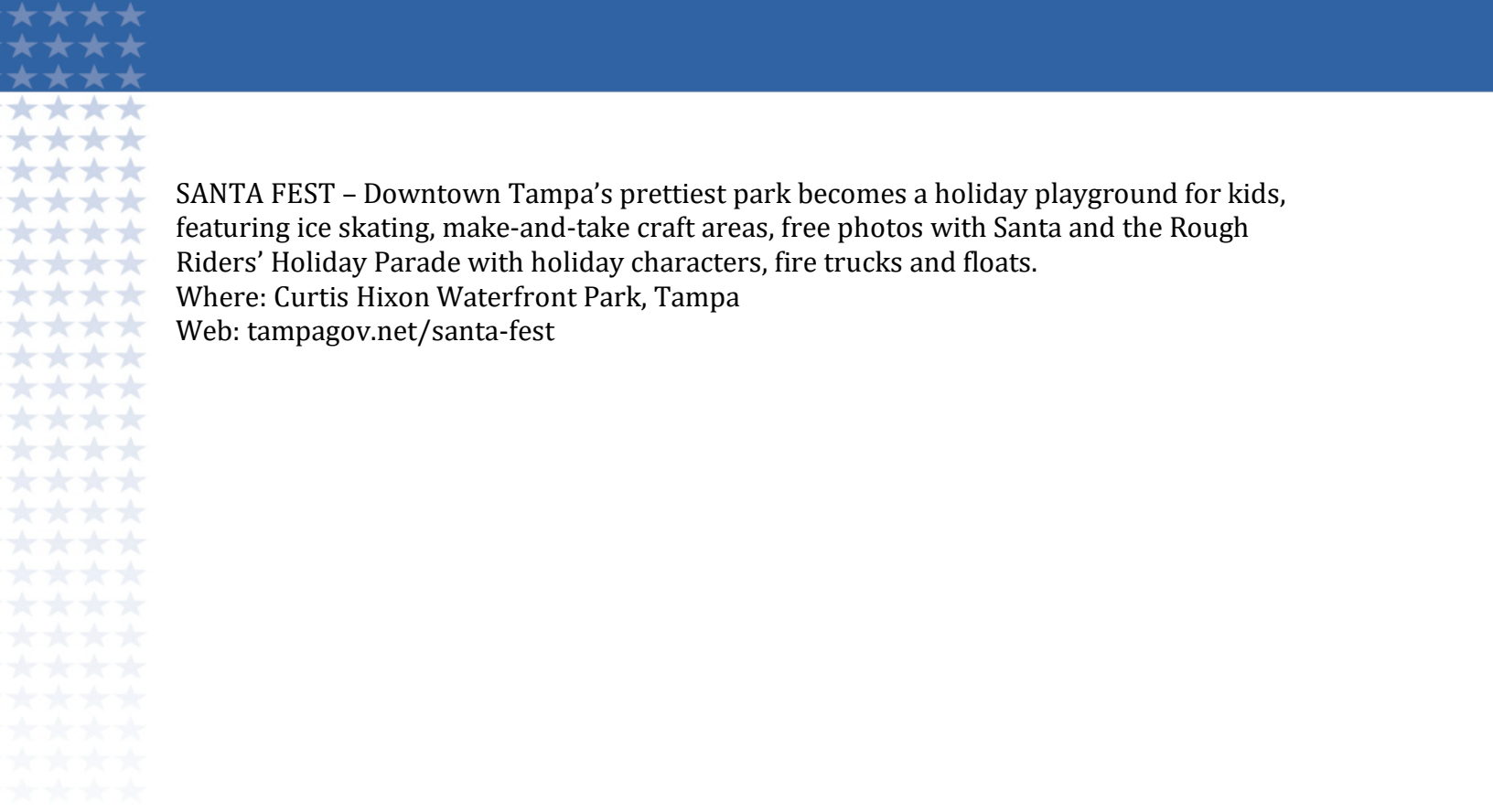
Where: Historic Ybor City

Web: [snowon7th.com](http://snowon7th.com)

**PLANT CITY BIKE FEST** – Vintage cruisers and souped-up Harleys descend on quaint downtown Plant City for a day while kids and adults revel in the spectacle of a bearded lady contest, a hula hoop competition, a caricature artist, live bands and a Santa appearance.

Where: McCall Park, downtown Plant City

Web: [facebook.com/PlantCityBikeFest](https://facebook.com/PlantCityBikeFest)



SANTA FEST – Downtown Tampa’s prettiest park becomes a holiday playground for kids, featuring ice skating, make-and-take craft areas, free photos with Santa and the Rough Riders’ Holiday Parade with holiday characters, fire trucks and floats.

Where: Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park, Tampa

Web: [tampagov.net/santa-fest](http://tampagov.net/santa-fest)